35c

The Long Island FISHERMAN

The Difference Between Just Fishing and Catching Fish!

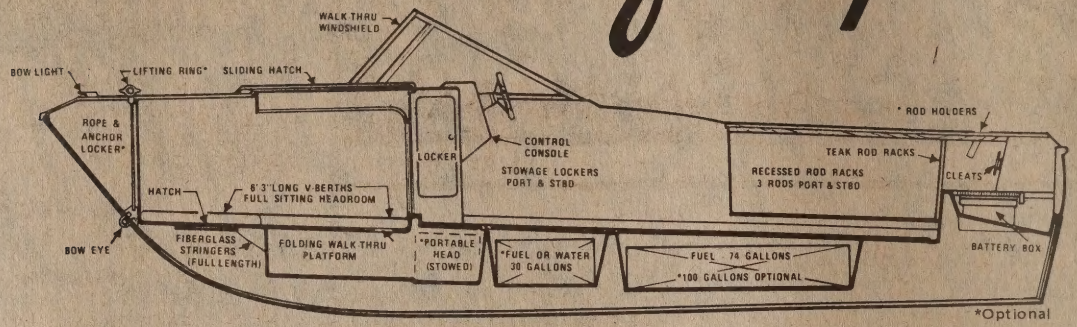
MAY 13th, 1976, ISSUE No. 17

200-Mile Limit Supporters Awarded

030272-
E HOCKER
53 LOCUST AVE
ISLIP NY 11751

BLACKFISH SPECIAL

New from Aquasport®



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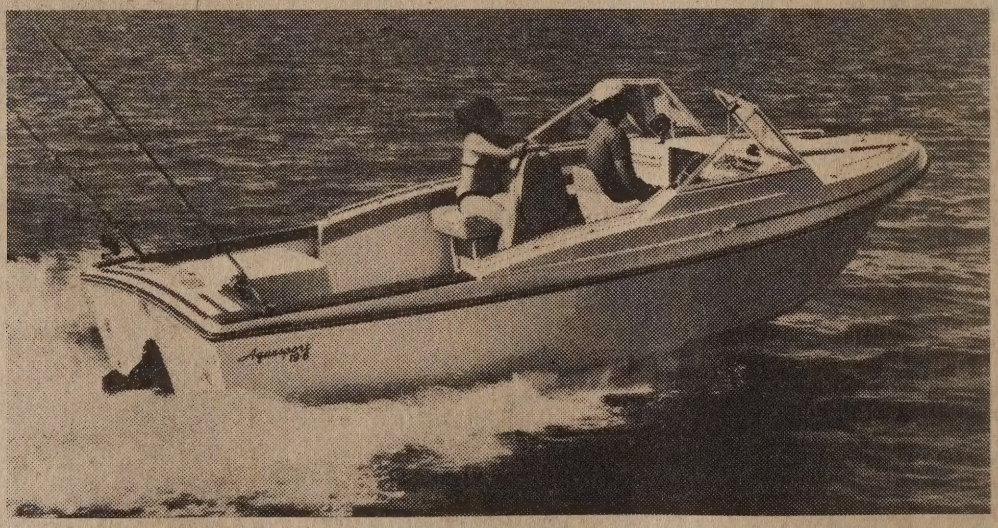

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stern drive & inboard power

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The Long Island FISHERMAN

The Difference Between Just Fishing and Catching Fish!

VOLUME 11, No. 17 MAY 13th, 1976

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About the Cover—

The Emergency Committee to Save America's Marine Resources presents awards to leading congressional supporters of the 200 mile fisheries limit at the annual Rod and Gun Editors of Metropolitan New York dinner. From left to right: Rep. Mario Biaggi (D-10th District, N.Y.); Jerry Kenny, President Rod and Gun Editors of Metropolitan New York; Rep. Matthew J. Rinaldo (R-12th District, N.J.); Rep. Edwin B. Forsythe (R-6th District N.J.); Rep. Norman F. Lent (R-4th District, N.Y.); Allan J. Ristori, Chairman, Emergency Committee to Save America's Marine Resources. See page 6.

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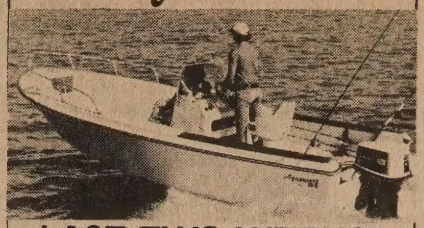

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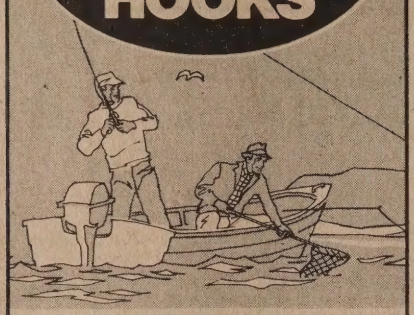

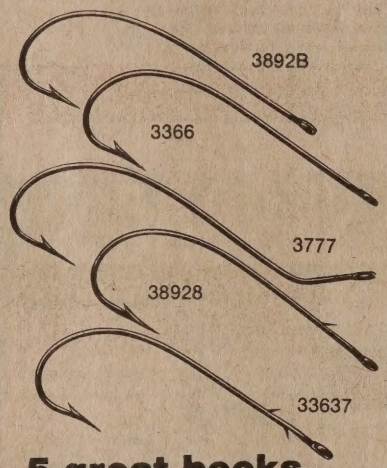

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CODFISH WORMS

Every year in the spring (end of March through April), I go codfishing in Quincy, Massachusetts out of Hurley's Boat Livery and I fish off buoy 6 off the sewer plant.

The codfish I catch are between 4 and 15 pounds. When I fillet and skin the fish, I have noticed thin, red worms approximately 2 to 2½ inches curled up in the meat about 1/8 inch into the meat. They are alive upon removal. I also go codishing in the ocean at Montauk where I do not encounter this problem.

Have you heard of this and if so, what is it? Is the codfish harmful to eat? Any information that you can supply woud be greatly appreciated. Thank You. **Richard Hong.**

Parasitic worms are quite common in all fish and are expecially common in codfish. Many housewives complain of worms, white and red, when cleaning and cooking codfish. The fish are perfectly good to eat no danger! Dr. William A. Muller.

PRAISES FOR FLUKE BOOK

I have been an avid reader of the LIF 6 many years and I had the honor of meeting Scott Simons at the N.Y. Boat Show and must say he knows what he is talking about when it comes to fishing.

At the show I purchased his book on "Fishing For Fluke." Scott's book is the most comprehensive on fluke fishing I have ever seen. Besides my friends and relatives purchasing their own copy, my copy is getting worn from passing around. I also have the weakfish book and am anxiously awaiting delivery of the flounder book. I could go on and on about the easy to understand fishing knowledge in these books, but the best way to find out is to buy them. You won't be sorry. *E. D. Josephson.*

Thank you! The books being published by The Fisherman on local species (Fluke, WEakfish and Flounder) have been met with tremendous acceptance from fishermen in the tri-state area and are about to go into their second printing shortly. Next to be published will be a large 11 x 15 inch book that will be a collection of the best works of our own Fred Guardineer. Watch for the announcement!

SMOKING FISH

My compliments to Whiting Evans on research well done. I have made the metal smoke house that was illustrated in issue #5 of L.I.F. (1976). I have smoked eels 4 times already since it's been in operation. As the time progresses I'll be getting better at smoking fish, I can't wait to try the recipes in issue #8 and experiment with other fish.

I hope that others who have tried the smoke house will be as satisfied and pleased as I am, a fisherman, and L.I.F. reader for many years past and future. **Fred Kiesel, Rockaway Point, N.Y.**

10th ANNIVERSARY OF THE L.I.F.

We congratulate you on your 10th year anniversary and hope that you have many many more. Without the L.I.F., this island would have been just another fishing place. I bet there would be thousands of anglers at your door-step if you ever stopped printing your great publication. You are part of Long Island history. Keep up the good work! **George Wilde, President of Marine Environmental Council of Long Island.**

CLUB NEWS

LONG ISLAND WEAKFISH TOURNY

The South Shore Marlin and Tuna Club of Babylon will sponsor its Second Annual Long Island WEakfish Tournament on Saturday May 22nd, 1976. Everyone is eligible and the entry fee is $2 per angler. Hours of this tournament are from 4 A.M. to 10 P.M.

No entry tags will be sold after 9 A.M. on Saturday May 22nd. Anglers may leave and return to any port on Long Island. Simply attach an offical entry tag to your heaviest weakfish of the day and have it weighed-in at any of the official weigh-in stations listed below during hours indicated.

C. Altenkirch, Hampton Bays (4-6 P.M.) Captree Boat Basin, West End. (3-5 P.M. and 8-10 P.M.) Babylon Town Dock, Bay End, (4-6 P.M.) Lassens Hi-Way Fishing, Moriches (4-6 P.M. and 8-10 P.M.) Heckscher State Park, Boat Ramp from 4-6 P.M.. Nil's Bait, Bay Shore Marina from 4-6 P.M. Hoppie's Marine, Patchogue from 4-6 P.M.. South Bay Fishing Station, West Sayville Creek from 4-6 P.M. and Duke's Tackle Shop, Lindenhurst from 4-6 P.M.

In order to be eligible your weakfish must be caught on Rod and Reel within Long Island waters. In case of TIE, $500 prize money will be divided . WINNER will be notified by telephone no later than Tuesday, May 25th.

All weakfish weighed-in will become property of Long Island Weakfish Con-

Lartest weakfish of the day shall receive $500 cash. Runner Up prizes are $25 for largest fish at each weigh-in Station. For more information, call George Spies at (516) 589-2522 or Don Ghegan at (516) 422-6054. One prize per angler.

HIGH TIDE TABLES

DAY	SANDY HOOK AM	SANDY HOOK PM	Breakwater Harbor AM	Breakwater Harbor PM	NEW YORK AM	NEW YORK PM	NEW LONDON AM	NEW LONDON PM	WILLETS POINT AM	WILLETS POINT PM	BRIDGE-PORT AM	BRIDGE-PORT PM	NEW-PORT AM	NEW-PORT PM	DATE
THUR	8:02	8:26	8:43	9:09	8:39	9:00	9:33	9:50	11:44	11:57	11:32	11:50	7:55	8:18	5/13
FRI	8:52	9:15	9:35	10:00	9:31	9:52	10:24	10:40	—	12:37	—	12:23	8:46	9:09	5/14
SAT	9:42	10:05	10:29	10:51	10:26	10:45	11:17	11:33	12:47	1:30	12:40	1:15	9:37	10:00	5/15
SUN	10:36	10:51	11:22	11:44	11:24	11:42	—	12:10	1:39	2:22	1:31	2:06	10:29	10:51	5/16
MON	11:31	11:50	—	12:18	—	12:22	12:25	1:06	2:32	3:20	2:22	2:59	11:22	11:43	5/17
TUE	—	12:25	12:39	1:17	12:36	1:17	1:23	2:06	3:28	4:23	3:16	3:52	—	12:15	5/18
WED	12:42	1:19	1:35	2:17	1:29	2:11	2:20	3:07	4:37	5:27	4:12	4:47	12:38	1:11	5/19
THUR	1:35	2:13	2:33	3:18	2:22	3:01	3:24	4:07	5:47	6:29	5:09	5:45	1:34	2:09	5/20

HOW TO USE TIDE TABLES

To compute the high tide for the area you wish to fish, simply find the closest area on the conversion tables. Add or subtract the hours and minutes as indicated from that areas station above. Example: "Shinnecock Inlet.....—0 50" is listed under "On SANDY HOOK." —0 50 means you subtract 50 minutes from the times given for the SANDY HOOK STATION for the day you are going fishing. This is the approximate time for the high tide in the area. For low tide, add 6 ½ hours to this figure.

On SANDY HOOK

STATEN ISLAND	+ 0 27
ATLANTIC HIGHLANDS	—0 01
Red Bank, Navesink R.I.	+ 0 48
Long Branch	—0 34
SHARK RIVER INLET	—0 18
Shark River Basin	+ 0 27
MANASQUAN INLET	—0 12
Seaside Park	—0 33
Mantoloking Bridge	+ 5 34
TOMS RIVER	+ 4 37
Waretown	+ 2 33
BARNEGAT LIGHT	—0 20
Manahawkin Bridge	+ 2 33
Beach Haven	+ 1 47
LITTLE EGG INLET	—0 01
Seven Islands	+ 0 12
Graveling Point	+ 1 05
Mullica River	+ 1 55
Grassy Bay	+ 1 08
ABSECON INLET	+ 0 14
Atlantic City Pier	—0 26
Gt. Egg Harbor Inlet	+ 0 12
GREAT EGG HARBOR	+ 0 46
CORSON INLET	+ 0 09
TOWNESEND INLET	+ 0 06
HEREFORD INLET	+ 0 02
Grassy Sound Bridge	+ 0 45
Cape May Harbor	—0 02
Rehoboth Beach	—0 07
INDIAN RIVER INLET	+ 0 14
SHINNECOCK INLET	—0 50
Shinnecock Bay	+ 1 25
East Quogue	+ 2 45
Shinnecock Canal	+ 1 18
Indian Reservation	+ 3 05
MORICHES INLET	—0 56
Smith's Point	+ 3 28
Harts Cove	+ 1 30
Potunck Point	+ 3 35
Mastic Beach	+ 3 28
FIRE ISLAND INLET	—0 38
Democrat Point	—0 38
Coast Guard Station	—0 19
Fire Island Light	+ 0 47
GREAT SOUTH BAY	
Sayville	+ 3 39
Heckscher State Pk.	+ 3 20
Bay Shore	+ 2 23
Babylon	+ 2 12
Amityville	+ 2 21
JONES INLET	—0 19
Zachs Bay	+ 1 25
Seaford Harbor	+ 2 05
Freeport Creek	+ 0 34
E. ROCKAWAY INLET	—0 06
Long Beach Bridge	+ 0 19
ROCKAWAY INLET	—0 00
Beach Ch. Bridge	+ 0 38
JFK Airport	+ 0 26

On BRIDGEPORT

Lloyd Point	+ 0 08
Cold Spring Harbor	+ 0 08
Bayville Bridge	+ 0 13
Eatons Neck Point	+ 0 03
Northport Bay	+ 0 03
Norwalk Islands	+ 0 10
Smithtown Bay	—0 03
Cranes Neck Point	+ 0 05
Port Jefferson Harbor	+ 0 03
New Haven Harbor	+ 0 08
Mount Sinai Harbor	—0 08
Herod Point	—0 07
Mattituck Inlet	+ 0 19
Horton Point	—0 20
Truman Beach	—0 42
Falkner Island	—0 13
Sachem Head	—0 10
Branford Harbor	—0 07
New Haven Harbor	—0 08
Milford Harbor	—0 07
Stratford	+ 0 27
Shelton	+ 1 36
Black Rock Harbor	—0 03
Saugatuck River	—0 01
South Norwalk	+ 0 10
Greens Ledge	—0 01
Stamford	+ 0 04
Cos Cob Harbor	+ 0 06
Greenwich	+ 0 02

On NEW LONDON

Orient Point	+ 0 27
Little Gull Is. (Race)	+ 0 12
Greenport	+ 1 04
Southold	+ 1 43
New Suffolk	+ 2 26
South Jamesport	+ 2 32
Shinnecock Canal	+ 2 33
Noyack Bay	+ 2 05
Sag Harbor	+ 0 59
Gardiners Bay	+ 0 21
Promised Land	—0 14
Montauk Inlet	—0 25
Montauk Point	—1 13
Niantic	+ 1 20
Stonington	—0 33
Noank, Mystic River	—0 23
THAMES RIVER	
Smith Cove	—0 01
Norwich	+ 0 09
CONNECTICUT RIVER	
Saybrook jetty	+ 1 10
Lyme	+ 1 24
Essex	+ 1 38
East Haddam	+ 2 41
Higganum Creek	+ 2 54

On WILLETS PT.

Little Neck Bay	—0 10
Execution Light	—0 06
Manhasset Bay	—0 01
Hempstead Harbor	—0 11
City Island	—0 03
Rye Beach	—0 28
Port Chester	—0 09
Mamaroneck	—0 08
New Rochelle	—0 24
Davids Island	—0 02

On B'WATER HB.

CAPE MAY POINT	—0 10
Miami Beach	+ 1 17
East Point	+ 0 53
Egg Island Point	+ 0 33
Cape Henlopen	—0 05
ROOSEVELT INLET	+ 0 09
Mispillion River Ent.	+ 0 33
St. Jones River Ent.	+ 0 57

On NEW YORK

Jersey City	+ 0 07
Geo. Washington Br.	+ 0 46
Spuyten Duyvil	+ 0 58
Ossining	+ 1 53
Peekskill	+ 2 24
West Point	+ 3 16
Newburg	+ 3 42

On NEWPORT

Sakonnet	—0 10
Tiverton	+ 0 21
Beavertail Point	—0 02
Prudence Is., Sandy Pt.	+ 0 10
Bristol	+ 0 10
Warren	+ 0 21
Nayatt Point	+ 0 12
Pawtucket	+ 0 21
East Greenwich	+ 0 16
Wickford	+ 0 12
Narragansett Pier	—0 08
Point Judith Harbor	—0 07
BLOCK ISLAND	
Great Salt Pond	+ 0 05
Old Harbor	—0 14
Watch Hill Point	+ 0 44

SUNRISE/SUNSET

5/10	5:45	8:09
5/15	5:39	8:14
5/20	5:34	8:19
5/25	5:31	8:23
5/30	5:28	8:28

PHASES OF THE MOON

NEW	1st Qtr.	FULL	2nd Qtr.
5/29	5/7	5/13	5/20

The Original Knight

SOLUNAR TABLES

When To Fish Or Hunt

The schedule of solunar periods for the following week as printed below has been taken from the original Knight Solunar Tables. Plan your day so that you will be fishing good areas during these times when the fish should be most active. The tables are not a guarantee you will catch fish, however.

The major periods begin at the time shown and last for an hour-and-a-half or two hours thereafter, and are in the bold type face. The minor periods are shorter in duration and lighter type.

	AM		PM	
	Minor	Major	Minor	Major
5/13	4:20	11:05	4:55	11:35
5/14	5:15	:	5:50	12:10
5/15	6:20	12:25	6:40	1:15
5/16	7:30	1:50	8:00	2:20
5/17	8:35	2:50	9:00	3:20
5/18	9:35	3:50	10:00	4:15
5/19	10:30	4:45	10:55	5:10
5/20	11:25	5:40	11:50	6:00

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40 FT. CHARTERED BOATS, A FULL CREW, 6 FISHERMEN PER BOAT.

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TRIPS #1—5 SOLD OUT!

TRIP #6	June 3—6
TRIP #7	JUNE 10—13
TRIP #8	JUNE 17—20
TRIP #9	JUNE 24—27

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State _____
LIF676

BTC FLOUNDER CONTEST RESULTS

The results of the Babylon Tuna Club April 25th Spring Flounder Contest are as follows:

1st place went to Doc Grell for his 3 pounder; 2nd to Tom Grell for his 2 lb. 7 ouncer; 3rd to Al Lorenzetti, Sr. for his flounder of 1 lb. 13 oz.; 4th to Chris Grell for his fish of 1 lb. 11 oz.; 5th to Harry Kirchen for his fish of 1 lb. 10 oz.; 5th to Joe Cottone for his fish also of 1 lb. 10 oz. and 6th to Valerie Jessen for her flounder of 1 lb. 9 oz.

CORRECTION

In last week's issue #16, dated May 6th, under Club News. Nick Vento caught an 11 pound bluefish, not a bluefin.

News Releases

CONGRESSMEN HONORED FOR 200 MILE EFFORTS

Four area congressmen were honored for their work on the 200 Mile Limit by The Emergency Committee To Save America's Marine Resources at a dinner in New York. The presentation of plaques to Congressmen Mario Biaggi (D-10th Dist., NY); Edwin Forsythe (R-6th Dist., NJ); Norman Lent (R-4th Dist., NY); and Matthew Rinaldo (R-12th Dist., NJ) were made at the annual dinner of the Rod and Gun Editors of Metropolitan New York, held at the Tower Suite of the Time-Life Building on April 8th.

All four congressmen are members of the House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee, the group which originates fisheries legislation in the House. Rep. Biaggi is Chairman of the Coast Guard Subcommittee. He called for approval of increased Coast Guard funding to make enforcement of the 200 mile limit effective.

Congressman Forsythe is the ranking republican on the Fisheries Subcommittee and a firm friend of the marine sportfisherman. He assured the 250 guests that the White House had assured him the bill would be signed, despite State Department opposition.

Conressman Lent was, four years ago, the original sponsor of the 200-mile limit legislation for The Emergency Committee. He praised the Committee for its efforts in making the public aware of the problem.

Congressman Rinaldo stated that he got more mail on the 200 mile limit than any other subject. He emphasized that passage of the 200-mile limit by Congress is a signal to the Administration and the Russians that detente must be a two way street!

The Emergency Committee To Save America's Marine Resources was formed over four years ago in order to promote the 200-mile limit. With its goal in sight, the Committee will now concentrate on seeing that the limit is enforced and conservation plans implemented.

NATIONAL SEASHORE ATTACKS SPORTSMEN

The Management of the Fire Island National Seashore has finally made public their plans for the Beach Buggy Sportsfishermen. The plans are very simple:

1. A limit of approximately 20 vehicles on the seven (7) miles of beach per day. 2. No beach buggies on weekends or holidays, and 3. Eventual phaseout of all beach buggies on Fire Island.

This attempt to remove the sportsfishermen from a National Park is a direct insult to sportsmen all over the country. The Beach Buggy Fishermen have done more to protect and preserve the beaches of Long Island including the National Seashore than all other conservation groups and the Department of Interior combined.

Yet, National Seashore plans to keep the honest and concerned sportsmen from the beach—Why? Because beach buggies cause erosion, or so they claim. And yet this is a hoax, because they have spent untold dollars of the taxpayers money trying to prove this theory, only to find beach buggy tracks **prefent erosion**. This doesn not, however, deter them for the sportsfishermen will be thrown off of this undeveloped, inaccessible stretch of beach.

Please join us in fighting this irresponsible and outlandish approach to park management. If the Department of Interior is permitted to continue this un-American activity, pretty soon all of the National Parks will be closed to sportsmen!

Write a letter like the one below and send it in immediately. Remember this is an election year. Let Washington hear the voice of the sportsmen.

The Honorable Gerald Ford, President
White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Ford:

I am totally against National Seashore's intention to throw the mobile sportsfishermen off the beach at Fire Island. I urge you to take immediate action to prevent this outrageous slaughter of an American tradition.

(Your signature and address.)

Thank You. The Long Island Beach Buggy Association, Inc., P.O. Box 101, Bayport, New York, 11705.

CONSERVATION COMMENTS *by Al Ristori*

Regional Fishery Management Councils will control Marine Fisheries—The 200 Mile Limit legislation recently enacted provides for the establishment of Regional Fishery Management Councils which will actually control marine fisheries within each region. Each state in the region is allocated at least two seats, one for a designated member (who will be the principal state official with marine fishery management responsibility) and at least one "public" member. Actually, most states will have at least two "public" members.

The governors of each state must nominate at least three "qualified individuals" (knowledgeable or experienced with regard to management on conservation or recreation or commercial harvest of fishery resources) for each available position within 45 days of the signing of the bill. The Secretary of Commerce will then select the members from those nominations. The Councils must commence operations within 120 days of enactment.

Since the Councils will operate on an irregular basis, only those qualified individuals who can take the time away from their jobs (or are retired) can be considered for the Councils. Pay will be on a per diem basis, plus expenses. Sportfishing representation on the Councils is essential if conservation considerations are to receive primary consideration. Candidates must be found quickly and letters (with biographies) sent to the governors of the respective states requesting nomination.

At the time this article is being written, candidates are starting to line up for the nominations. I've received permission from any employers (the Garcia Corporation) to take the time necessary to fulfill the duties of a Council member, if nominated. Mark Sosin, Internationally known outdoor writer has expressed his interest as a candidate for New Jersey. His wide range of experiences along all our coasts make him an ideal choice.

Harry Ross, Vice-Chairman of The Emergency Committee to Save America's Marine Resources will likely make an attempt at nomination in New York. Harry is semi-retired and has a son who's obtaining his masters in marine biology. An outstanding candidate in New York is Dr. William A. Muller, well-known writer and Associate Editor for "The Long Island Fisherman". Doc teaches marine sciences in college and is exceptionally well qualified for the Council.

If you'd like to see these people nominated, write to the governor of your state and ask him simply to nominate them in order to provide adequate sportfishing representation on the Councils. If you have other suggestions for nominees, by all means, send their names to the governor (along with a biography). Be sure to determine first whether the potential nominee will be able to afford the time involved in carrying out his duties. Also, let this department know of your nomination as we may be able to line up sportsman support for him (or her.)

The first step in saving our marine resources has been taken with enactment of the 200 mile bill. However, that action won't be meaningful unless we see to it that the Councils that will control the fisheries are imbued with a conservation ethic!

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Your reporter recently attended a very interesting though informal conference in the offices of Robert Schoening, Director of the National Marine Fisheries Service, Washington, D.C. These tri-monthly sessions involve Director Schoening and his top aides with an informal marine gamefish group, organized by John Gottschalk. Among the conservation leaders attending were Elwood Harry (IGFA); Frank Carlton and Chris Weld (National Coalition for Marine Conservation); Diane McLaughlin (American League of Anglers); Dick Stroud (Sport Fishing Institute); Bob Pond (Stripers Unlimited); Carl Sullivan (American Fisheries Society); Jack Lorenz (Izaak Walton League); Irwin Alperin (Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission); George Reiger (Conservation Editor, "Field and Stream"); and Tom Schedler (Executive Director of AFTMA).

Many items were discussed during the free-flowing session, but manning of the Regional Fishery Management Councils and bluefin tuna regulations were the primary topics. This meeting is just another example of how far sportfishing interests have advanced their positions in the federal government. Only a few years ago, the National Marine Fisheries Service was commercially dominated and a sportsmen's representative would have a hard time even having his opinion heard. Yet, today, leaders of sportsmen's organizations not only have an "open door" at NMFS, but are actually solicited for their opinions. More than any specific legislation, this bodes well for the future of the marine fisheries!

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At a recent National Marine Fisheries Service meeting on "extended Fisheries Jurisdiction, Opportunity and Challenge", two Gulf-state directors of commercial fisheries expressed concern that marine recreational fisheries were expanding to the point that it was forcing accommodations adverse to commercial fishing. Dick Stroud, executive Vice President of the Sport Fishing Institute, pointed out, in reply, that it was sportfishing groups that first called for the 200 mile limit. He also emphasized that the millions of marine sportfishermen have a traditional entitlement to a share of the marine resources and contribute a great deal to the country's supply of food with their personal catches. Dick also introduced an interesting quote from a 1964 North American Wildlife Conference, by Douglas Hey, Dept. of Nature Conservation, South Africa. Hey stated, "I would like to explain to these gentlemen that in our country we have turned our estuaries over to recreational fishing. We find that our estuaries are far more valuable as a recreational facility for our people and they bring a far greater return used as a recreational resource than to use them for commercial fishing." We like to think of ourselves as being terribly advanced in our economic, social and environmental policies, but it seems to me that we'd better start learning something about fisheries from the South Africans before our inshore fisheries are decimated by overfishing.

Surf Side with Doc Muller

Weakfishing The South Shore Back-Bay Part II

Last week in Part I, I introduced the possibilities of weakfishing in back-bay areas of the south shore. In review it should be restated that many sectors of the State Channel are productive as well as the bridges and inlet bars, but all spots are not good weakfishing areas simultaneously. The fishing is easy so let's give it a try.

LURES:

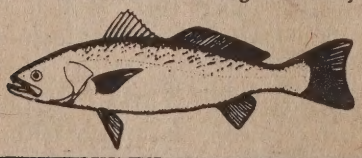
Plastic Shrimp:

I have already made it quite clear that I am not a plastic shrimp devotee. However, these are very effective lures and several should be part of your arsenal. The smaller versions of the Salty Dog, Touts, Viking Shrimp, Lupo Shrimp, etc are best. That is, the half-ounce and three-quarter ounce versions. The shrimp come in a wide variety of colors but most anglers use the iridescent pink. Yet, amber has been sensational at dusk and bright yellow has had its moments during overcast days.

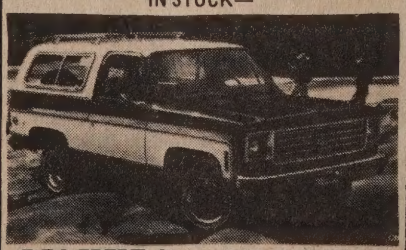
The plastic shrimp should be jigged slowly and regularly as close to the bottom as you can without picking up weed.

PLUGS:

I have seen many anglers tossing Mirro-lures from the bog and they do very well. In case you are not familiar with this plug it has no swimming lip and the eye is on the head. The fisherman must give the lure action by twitching the rod tip which will cause the plug to dart irregularly about. The plug sinks slowly and most fishermen whom I have observed let the lure settle toward the bottom before beginning a slow retrieve. The plug catches fish both during daylight and evening hours.



EIGHT 4-WHEEL DRIVES IN STOCK—



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Swedish Style Swimming Plugs:

The Rebels, Redfins, Rapalas and Helcats are good weakfishing plugs especially at night. In deep water some anglers prefer the sinker models although I have not had as much success with the sinker as I have had with the floater. The weaks feed a lot like bass at night and that steady slow wiggle seems to drive 'em crazy on the surface.

The five and one half inch size is the best although they will attack the larger versions when they are feeding heavily. There is some inconsistency of action with these plugs and therefore you should test one in shallow water before you begin fishing with it. If you get a "dud" with poor action there is little that you can do to correct the situation except to bend the eye up and down. However, this is not always the answer, and since the plastic lip cannot be manipulated you will have to discard most poor swimmers.

Color selection seems to be a matter of angler taste rather than weakfish preference. Still, blue or silver Rebels, white or silver and sometimes the white with red head Redfins, blue elcats, and similar colors in the Rapala series seem to be the most often used.

Atoms and Danny Plugs:

The 7/8 ounce Atom surface swimmer is an excellent choice for night feeding weakfish. However, remove the hooks that come with the lure and replace them with sturdy quality number two trebles. The action will improve from a quick wiggle to a slow wobble.

The one and one-half ounce and one-half inch Danny surface swimmer is also a good choice. This plug comes in a dark blue with silver scales and this version seems to be the most productive. In calm weakfish waters the retrieve should be slow so that the plug leaves a V-shaped wake as it waddles along.

Darters:

Sometimes small yellow or white darters will turn the trick for weakfish in the back-bay, especially in the vicinity of the inlets where rips make up around sand bars and other obstructions.

Larger Swimming Plugs:

There are times when bigger plugs such as the Junior Atom and the Danny six-inch surface swimmer are successful plugs. They are best in the fall around the bridges and inlet areas where the weaks gather along with the bass and blues to feed on bunker, snappers, and baby weakfish.

The best colors seem to be white or light blue. These colors cover the basic coloration patterns of the larger baits that are in these areas in the fall. Some anglers load the plugs with up to an ounce of lead so that they will work well below the surface.

TUBE LURES:

The tube lures such as the Tri-Fin Whip-Tail and Bingle Lancer are good lures for the State Channel fishing. Although my favorite Whip-Tail color is white, it is not as productive in the back-bay as it is in east-end waters. Amber with a lead colored head has been dynamite for a small group of bog-bound anglers last year.

I have found that these lures are much more successful when they are tipped with strips of squid. Use fresh local squid and cut it into long thin tapered strips that are as long and as wide as the surgical tubing of the lure. Push the hook through the wide end as close to the edge of the strip as you can without losing holding strength.

These lures must be worked erratically toward the bog after the lure has settled toward the bottom. Sometimes long slow sweeps of the rod are the ticket to success while at other times quick twitches of the rod tip are best. You must experiment both with the depth at which the lure is working and the speed of the retrieve.

FIGHTING THE FISH:

Make sure that your drag setting is light before you make your first cast. Remember that the mouths of the weaks are like tissue paper and a tight drag will only wear a button hole in the lip and/or pull free. A light drag combined with a flexible rod affords the angler an advantage while fighting big weakfish.

Work the fish toward the bog by lifting the rod toward a noon position and then reeling in steadily as the rod is lowered

to a nine o'clock position. Repeat this procedure. However, when the fish runs let it take drag but make sure that your rod points toward a 10 or 10:30 o'clock position so that the fish must work against both the rod and the drag. Do not impart any jerky rod action at any time. Be confident that you have set the hook and that repeated banging will only lose you the fish.

LANDING THE FISH:

The boat fishermen has a net neatly at his disposal, but the beach fishermen likes his gaff. Weakfish can be gaffed but not as easily as a bass or a bluefish because their bodies are more tubular. However, a gaffed weakfish can't be released either and therefore a net would seem to be the best choice. A trout net is not a bad compromise to the larger boat landing net although the fish will be a little harder to coax into the smaller diameter of the trout landing net. Nonetheless, it is possible with a little patience and if the angler has properly tired the fish before landing it to the net.

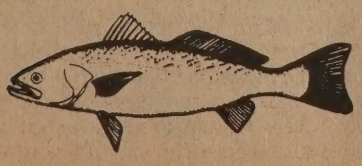
It is also possible to land even big weakfish by hand. When the tired fish is close by, reel in as much line as you can and reset the drag to a very light setting. The very easy drag is recommended in case the weakfish should suddenly decide that it isn't as tired as it once "thought". Go to one knee while at the same time extending the rod high above your head. The weakfish will be on its side and you should be able to insert your index finger under the gills by the throat. Lift gently so that the septum between the gills come to rest on the curve of your finger. The lure can then be easily removed with your other hand and the fish can either be set free or put on the stringer.

TACKLE:

A six to eight foot rod is ideal for this fishing. Remember that rods of the same size come in many different flexibilities. You need a flexible rod for weakfishing and the pole should bend along its entire length right down to the butt.

The reels should be small. Good models are the Penn 712 and 722, Garcia-Mitchell 300, Cardinal 6, and Shakespeare 2062. Your mono line should be light and I would suggest an upper limit of 10 pound test, but go right on down to 4 or 2 pound test on the light stuff.

Ok guys, all that remains is for you to get your—down to the bog and catch a few weakfish.



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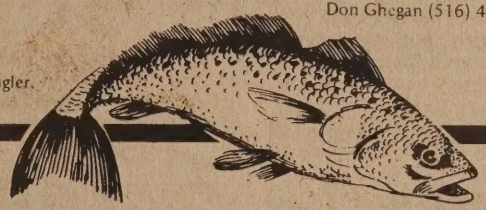

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ASK THE CAPTAIN

OPINIONS & ANSWERS

by Capt. Ronnie Lepper

Question: Ronnie Hayden, Bethpage, N.Y.

I usually fish the Montauk surf in the fall. This year I'll be out there for a few days around the end of May and the beginning of June. I understand bass "may be available" from Ditch Plains east to the point. Can you suggest productive baits and lures for night and daylight hours. P.S.—afraid I'll probably be walking the beach instead of riding. Thanks.

Answer:

The whole south side is usually more productive for fish at that time of year (late May, early June), although it is not that great. The fishing is fair. The area between Frisbees and Ditch Plains is a good bet. Seeing as you are walking instead of riding, you're limited to the most accessible areas. Light tackle 12 to 15 pound test outshines the heavy stuff with small Redfin and Rebel type lures along with tins and bucktails doing a good job. Any of these lures will catch day or night. The area between Gin Beach and Shagwong on the north side produces some very respectable weakfish at that time of year, and you should add some shrimp in your box for them. Up front from the light to the north bar you should find a good supply of school fish with a sprinkle of big ones mixed in.

Question: Mark Farrell, West Brighton *Staten Island.*

I want to buy a new boat exclusively for bass fishing in the 24 to 26 foot class with inboard engine. I'm not asking you for trade names but for your opinion of the best design. I have looked at Vee bottoms, with hard chines and at round bottom full keel boats. Many people have given me their opinions of each, the pros and cons are endless. I would appreciate your feelings in this matter as I know you do a lot of this type fishing.

Answer:

First of all let me clarify. I assume that by a keel boat you mean a semi-displacement hull, so this is what I shall base my answer to you on. For a serious striped bass fisherman who will spend most of his time chasing roccus around the east coast. I would suggest only one kind of boat, and that is a semi-displacement hull with a full length keel, skeg and a shoe to protect the prop. The boat should be equipped with an oversize rudder, stern controls and a fairly large V8 engine capable of moving the boat at least 20 mph. You would find that combination hard to beat. This design will hold a true course while trolling and not be badly affected by the wind as the vee's are. She will drift much slower than the Vee, which is very important while bait fishing or plug casting. The skeg and shoe will give you lots of underwater protection while fishing in close on the rocks or running shallow water. The stern controls allow one man to fish and run the boat alone. The round bottom also gives you a much more seakindly ride. The vees have their place, but I do not feel this type of fishing is one of them. This is just my opinion, and really needs much more explaining than I can fit into this space. If after reading this you are still confused call me and I will go into more detail.

Question: Bob Moore, Lakeview, N.Y.

During this past winter I found myself involved in a dispute about fishing rods for live lining bass and blues with bunker. To use a heavy rod, a light one length of rod and guide selection etc...Being one of the originators of this type fishing in this area we decided to settle this dispute with your answer.

Answer:

We first started with live bunkers around 1964. In those days of plenty (which are gone forever) two men could average 20 to 30 fish per tide (three hours). These fish were in the 20 to 30 pound class which were caught 6 days a week. With that amount of fish being caught you do tend to form certain opinions on tackle. In my opinion and the opinion of many well versed bunker fishermen, the lighter longer rod takes preference (7 to 8 ft.) over soft action. With this outfit you miss less fish on the original hit. Bass take a bunker head first with the hooks facing inward, as you strike back you are actually turning the bait around in the fishes throat. If you come back too hard you will pull the bait right out of his throat. Lift slowly with a soft rod utilizing the normal stretch in the mono, and you have a much better chance of hooking the fish. Using this system we used to lose one out of twenty fish. Lastly, a good quality stainless guide is completely adequate as long as you watch them for wear.

Question: Lou Cappaso, Pelem, Westchester.

Although last season was not the greatest in Long Island Sound for live bait bass and bluefishing, I still enjoyed it, and caught my share. What bothers me is that most of us fish close into the beach, around the rocky shore line and spend a lot of time fishless. It seems we are always waiting for the fish to come in close. I have caught quite a few bass and blues in close but never have the fast action and large catches [more than 2 or 3 big bass] that I read about on the south shore. Have you any suggestions to increase my catch?

Answer:

First of all, let me say that my bass fishing in the Sound has been a limited proposition. I did try a few experiments there with the late Al Rhiendfelder years ago with good success. Even though I do not fish there, I have friends that fish there exclusively and have excellent success, including last season. Between their experiences and my own, I feel that alot of time is wasted fishing in close **when the action is slow**. When the fishing slows down, inshore, these fellows move off the beach and look for bunker schools no matter how small. When they locate bait activity they put on bunker spoons and fish deep under the bait. While trolling around these schools with the big spoons they have had catches of big bass that would make you stutter, up to a dozen fish in the 30 pound to 50 pound class. The funny part of this situation is that the inshore fisherman run back to these bunker schools to replenish their live bait supply, and watch these sharpies trolling and catching, and run right back to the beach to drift live bait with little or no success. I have had the exact same situation happen to me on the south shore many times.

Question: Donald Troy, Hauppauge, N.Y.

My stainless steel wire trolling line has failed several times right at the spot where I had put my markers. Can you suggest a way to prevent this?

Answer:

You left out the most important part of your question, such as the type of markers you are using, how you put them on, the pound test and diameter of

your stainless wire and how long you used it before it let go. I'll try my best to give you a valid explanation, and if it does not alleviate your problem, please forward me more detailed information.

First of all, I would not use stainless wire under .023 diameter for all around trolling, the lighter wire does not hold up as well. For my own use, I prefer .025 solid monel. Never use a dissimilar metal to mark your wire such as uncovered copper wire wrapped into the stainless for it will cause a galvanic action (electrollisis) causing the wire to corrode at that spot. The use of small brass swivels or bead chain will cause the same galvanic action. Most people think that swivels are stainless because they are silver colored and shine, when most of them are plated brass. Never use a marker that causes a solid spot such as a piece of bead chain silver soldered to the wire, as it will always break on a solid marker. The wire must be able to bend naturally at all times. My suggestion to the average fisherman is to acquire a good grade of water proof tape in ¼" diameter. This tape is sold in a variety of colors, and you can use a different color for each marker.

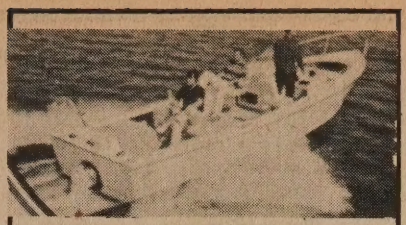
Make a long wrap approximately five inches long on dry wire, no corrosion or lubricant on the wire. A light touch with a very fine piece of sandpaper "220 before you put the wrap on makes for a better bond. Let someone hold the wire on both sides of the wrap giving you two free hands to make a tighter job. Keeping the wire kink free should give you at least two seasons of hard fishing with slip free markers. Re-tie your wire splices at the front and the back of your wire at least once for every ten trips and watch your rod tip for wear. Good luck and let me know if your problem is solved.

Question: Carl Taylor, Montclair, N.J.

When fishing off the N.J.coast during the summer, I've often noticed large schools of breaking bluefish. While trolling thru these fish and catching blues I thought I saw striped bass rolling and feeding among the bluefish. My fishing partner tells me I'm crazy that blues and bass don't feed together. Who is right?

Answer:

Bass and blues definitely feed together. I've caught them this way more times than I can remember, and do not let anyone tell you that they catch only school bass among the blues, because I have caught many a large bass mixed with 2 to 5 pound blues.



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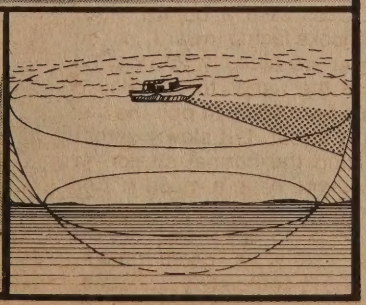

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THE BOTTOM LINE

with Scott Simons

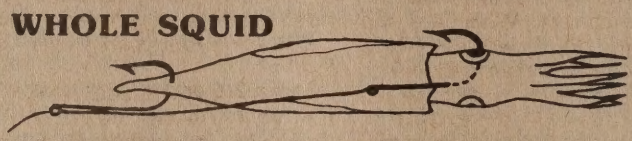
Advanced Weakfishing Part Four

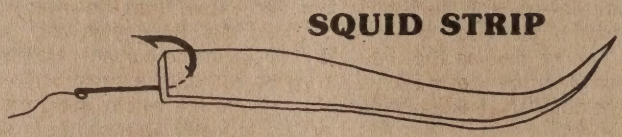
Bottom fishing for weakfish with bait has almost become a lost art for fishermen due to the increasing popularity of artificials. This is particularly true in Great South Bay, where the plastic pink shrimp is used almost exclusively in the shallow waters there. But there is still a lot of bait fishing going on in the deeper waters of the Peconics, and it's an effective method for taking weakfish wherever they are found...Great South Bay included.

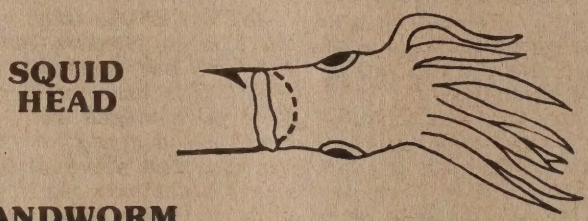
First, the rig. The most important function that a bottom rig for weakfish serves is to deliver the bait into the feeding zone, which is usually within three or four feet of the bottom. So the snell of the hook should be attached to the leader no more than four feet above the sinker. Depending on the speed of the drift and amount of scope to the line out, this will put the bait at a level of two or three feet off the bottom. If the drift is too slow and the bait is just hanging down within a foot of the bottom, it's a good idea to add a small cork to the snell about a foot away from the hook to raise the bait higher in the feeding zone and keep it away from trash fish on the bottom.

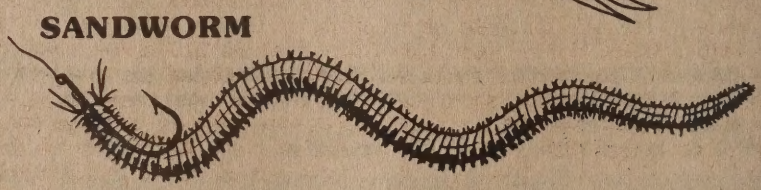
The length of the hook snell should be about 36 inches and made of relatively light leader material—about 30 pound test is ideal. A long, light leader will keep the bait in the feeding zone, moving "naturally" and undulating in the moving current as the boat drifts. The best all around hook pattern is the beak, with a split shank "bait holder" depending on the type of bait being used. The size of the beak hook will also be determined by the type of bait used. To attach the hook snell to the leader, tie a one-inch end loop to the end of the snell and attach it to a dropper loop tied into the leader four feet above the sinker. The sinker is attached to the bottom of the leader on a large end loop. Best pattern to use while drifting is the bank sinker which is less likely to hang up on a rough bottom.

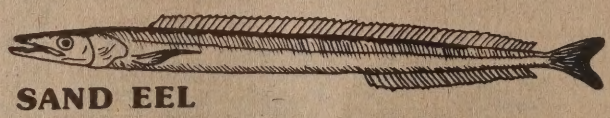
It's also a good idea to add a second hook to the weakfish rig for other species that may be found in the same area. Early in the season in Great South Bay (May) add a Chestertown hook just above the sinker and bait it with a piece of worm for flounder. In June and July add a 3/0 beak hook with a 36 inch snell about a foot above the sinker and bait-up with a strip of squid for fluke or, if you luck out, even an occasional double-











header of large weaks. If you are fishing in the Peconics, attach a number one or 1/0 beak hook with a 12 to 15 inch short snell and bait up with a slice of skimmer clam. This bottom hook will often produce a mixed bag consisting of blackfish, porgies and large flounder.

And now for the menu of bait that the weakfish like to make their selection from. All are equally effective when the conditions are correct. When are the conditions correct for a particular bait? Answer: when the weakfish decide that they would like to feed on a particular bait, then conditions are right to use that particular bait as bait. Or in other words, who the hell knows—except the weak fish? So it's always a good idea to carry more than one type of bait so that you can offer the fish a choice. Let's take a look at each of the popular weakfish baits and how to rig them.

WHOLE SQUID. Extremely effective on large, tiderunner class weakfish. The best areas to use a whole squid is in deep holes or troughs, inlets or the deeper waters in the Peconics. Do **NOT** purchase the frozen California squid—it is widely believed by many respected anglers that the weakfish can detect a difference in texture and odor from the local variety. Instead, purchase your whole squid fresh in the local fish market. Ask the fisherman for a couple of pounds of the **smallest** squid he has—ideal size are those with a mantal length of no longer than four or five inches.

Whole squid should always be rigged up on a tandem hook rig made with 4/0 beak hooks without a split shank. (See L.I.F. Volume 10, Number 21, "The Bottom Line" on how to tie a tandem hook rig). The top hook is placed no more than a half-inch from the tip of the mantal. Pass the hook completely through the mantal and plastic-like backbone, leaving the point of the hook exposed. The "stinger" hook is placed between the eyes of the head, again making sure the point of the hook is exposed. When properly rigged, the squid should hang vertically when held up by the leader. If the body of the squid has a bend in it, or the tip of the mantal bends down, the bait will spin like a propeller in the current and be ineffective.

When a weakfish picks up the bait, let him run with it by putting the reel on free-spool so line can be taken—even the largest of weakfish needs a little time to swallow a whole squid. After a few moments, gently begin applying some pressure with your thumb on the spool. If the fish stops running, ease-off and let him take more line. Wait until the fish continues to run when pressure is applied before attempting to set the hook.

SQUID STRIPS Excellent for taking weakfish. Again, use local fresh squid whenever possible with a mantal length of five to seven inches. Cut off the head and save. Pull off the wings and discard. Place the blade of a knife inside the mantal, then cut outward so that you end up with a flat sheet of squid in the shape of a V. Remove the plastic-like backbone and scrap off the guts and skin. Starting at the top of the V, cut the strips about three-quarters of an inch wide, and slowly taper to a point at the bottom of the V.

Use a 2/0 or 3/0 beak hook without a split shank to rig the pennant-shaped squid strip. Imbed the hook **once** about a half-inch down from the wide end of the strip so that it wiggles and undulates enticingly in the current. No need to let the fish run with a squid strip—usually they inhale the whole thing on the run and practically wrench the rod out of your hands.

SQUID HEADS. Large squid heads are also an effective bait for large weakfish. Use those left over after cutting strip baits, or purchase large squid heads in your local fish market. Rig on a tandem hook with one hook in the tough flesh above the eyes and the stinger hook imbedded in one of the tentacles. Smaller heads may be rigged with a single 5/0 or 6/0 beak hook imbedded between the eyes with the point exposed. As when fishing whole squid, make sure the bait does not spin unnaturally and let the fish run awhile after a pick-up before trying to set the hook.

SANDWORMS. Whole sandworms are excellent bait for taking weakfish, particularly in warmer summer months during the doldrums. They may be used effectively using the full range of weakfishing techniques - drifting, anchored casting, deep-jigging or trolling. While sandworms will take fish during the daylight hours, it is not until the times around dawn and dusk and during the black of night that the worm really comes into its own as a weakfish killer. When fishing a sandworm during these times, you have the added advantage of very possibly taking a nice school striper, which also like a nice bloody worm.

For drifting, use the standard high-leader rig with a number one Beak hook with a split shank. The split shank will help to keep the worm from sliding down the shank and bunching up on the bend of the hook. Put the point of the hook in the mouth of the sandworm and thread the sandworm onto the hook, then bring the point outside the body so it is exposed and the sandworm lies straight with the shank of the hook. Eventually the worm will die, so if this is important to you try attaching the head of the worm to the shank of the hook with a couple of

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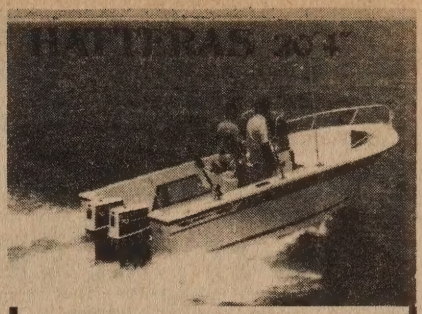

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BASS FISHING with Capt. John DeMaio

Part I The Phantom of Broad Channel

The first striped bass I ever caught was on the old south channel bridge, Cross Bay Boulevard. Commonly known as the second bridge or toll bridge. That was about 28 years ago. In those days it seemed everyone was a bridge fisherman. Why not! A good fisherman could catch a mess of fish on the Cross Bay Bridge, year 'round.

Like so many others, I began my fishing career along these bridges. Slowly, but surely, I worked my way up the fishing ladder of prestige. Flounders in the spring, herring in the winter. (I wish I had a buck for every time I played hookey and hitch-hiked down to the first bridge to jerk herring) snappers, fluke seabass and porgies in the summer. The fall was a mixture of everything with the accent on blackfish. Taking up the slack, from spring to fall, were eels. Endless amounts of eels.

The bass were always waiting. Waiting for me to mature as a fisherman and seek them out. Year after year they would return to their respective stations under the bridge. Here they would chase bait amongst the piles and in the tide eddies. But the bridges were not the only place the bass would swim. Another excellent spot and the reason for this writing, was the Long Island Railroad tracks.

These tracks, or trestle, ran from Howard Beach on the north side to Rockaway Beach on the south side. Most of the 5 miles of trestle traversed over shallow water and marshes. The biggest expanse of open water was on the north side. Another great expanse was from Broad Channel to Rockaway Beach. This was my favorite. Here you had deep water and strong tide. The majority of the bass that moved in and out of the headwaters of the bay, the Nassau County side, passed thru here. Some stopped to feed and move on, many stayed.

Bass fishing here was dynamite. And yet, as good as it could be, catching them took some knowledge. As a kid, I could remember seeing bass, steming the tide between the piles in the early morning light. They always refused my offering of worms or clams. What the hell did I know about lures! Here is an example of how good the fishing was then. A man who worked for the Long Island Rail Road and lived in one of those houses along the tracks, used to catch 'em good with a bamboo pole with thick "shoemaker string". On the end was a bucktail of some kind. His method of fishing was to walk the tracks hanging the bamboo stick out over the water and simply drag the bucktail along the surface. Man did he ever catch. And with what? The most basic fishing gear possible.

My time along the tracks came after the railroad ceased to run. For some years, the L.I.R.R. stopped service. Neglect became obvious and access to the tracks made easier. Because of no train traffic, the turn table in the channel was left in the open position. This cut the fishing area down to about 2 city blocks. All one had to do was park the car at the foot of the trestle, and walk out on the tracks. It was all deep water.

My first multiple catch of bass was here. How old I was I cannot remember. I do know I was too young to drive. The catch was 4 bass. Everyone about 5 pounds. For a lure I used the old pee wee jig, (a small block tin,) and a sandworm. The use of lures was still to come. As I walked off the tracks that night with 4 striped bass in a cardboard box, I had a feeling of euphoria. An ounce of pot could not have produced the same effect. As last I had arrived. No more could the November herring at the first bridge excite me. My lust for fishing had reached new heights. The tracks were to see more of me in years to come. In fact, they were to see me the next night. No sooner had the pee wee and worm slipped ten feet below the surface than I went fast to a good size bass. The fish ran for the poles and the line parted on the barnacles. Shaking like a leaf from excitement, I retied. Once again the hooked fish ran for the pilings and cut the line. That was it. The rest of the night was a waste. Not so much as a bite. Of course an eel or two, but no bass. It seemed that my new found confidence had taken a beating. My attitude turned to one of revenge, not dismay. For the rest of my fishing career I would continue to pursue in such a manner, with vengeance.

Fishing the trestle was no easy task. You must first realize that the tracks were no more than railroad ties. A small walkway ran down the middle of the two tracks. That served as a rest area. Otherwise it was a railroad tie, an open space, a railroad tie, an open space, etc. This would not have been too bad if all one had to do was sit and fish. Unfortunately, the standard bass catching procedure was to walk the ties and drag the line along. Like a slow troll. So you can imagine what it might have been like, especially at night stepping from beam to beam. I missed once, and both feet went into the open space while a tie drove up between my legs. Thank God the beam stopped short of its mark. The only thing broken was 4 inches off the rod tip.

At the southern end, was the open channel. Thru this channel flowed all the boat traffic to Idlewild Airport. Large tugs pushing huge fuel barges, and ocean going tankers that pumped out the excess sewage at the end of efferts Boulevard, were the giants of the channel. On the flood, the tide ran hard. The channel opening was small. It was almost impossible for any of these large vessels not to hit the bumpers when coming up on the flood tide. In fact, as I found out many years later, a couple of captains made a game of it. Who could run the channel fastest. The force of these big ships slamming sideways into nothing more than pilings was tremendous. An experienced fisherman did not merely brace himself. You put down the rod and embraced the nearest pile. The jolt would carry for at least a foot and sometimes more. Slowly the entire trestle would sway back and forth for about 10 seconds. One night we had to fish out some unsuspecting angler who was knocked into the black swirling tide. Even the hazards mentioned in these last two paragraphs were tame compared to the dangers braved in the future.

Everything must come to an end, and so did the old trestle. The Long Island Railroad gave up, or lost, the tracks to

the New York City Transit Authority. The subway. First off, the transit authority decided to eliminate the old tracks. That made sense. What with a fire every week, and the upkeep of wood, cement and steel would seem the thing. After all subways are not noted as a romantic form of travel. They are efficient, reliable and impersonal. And so were the new tracks.

Once again the planners had their way, and our wetlands were wasted for progress. (Actually Jamaica Bay should have been wiped out many years back. How a body of wilderness so large can exist in Metropolitan New York is amazing. The bay takes in Brooklyn, Queens and Nassau.) Most of the entire line of tracks was filled in. The marshes were covered. The shallows were covered. Here and there small lakes and ponds were created between the new tracks and Cross Bay Boulevard. Jamaica Bay died a little more. Died like the grass shrimp and killies. Like the blue claw crabs and the bank mussels. Still for the tenacious bass fishermen many bass were still to be caught.

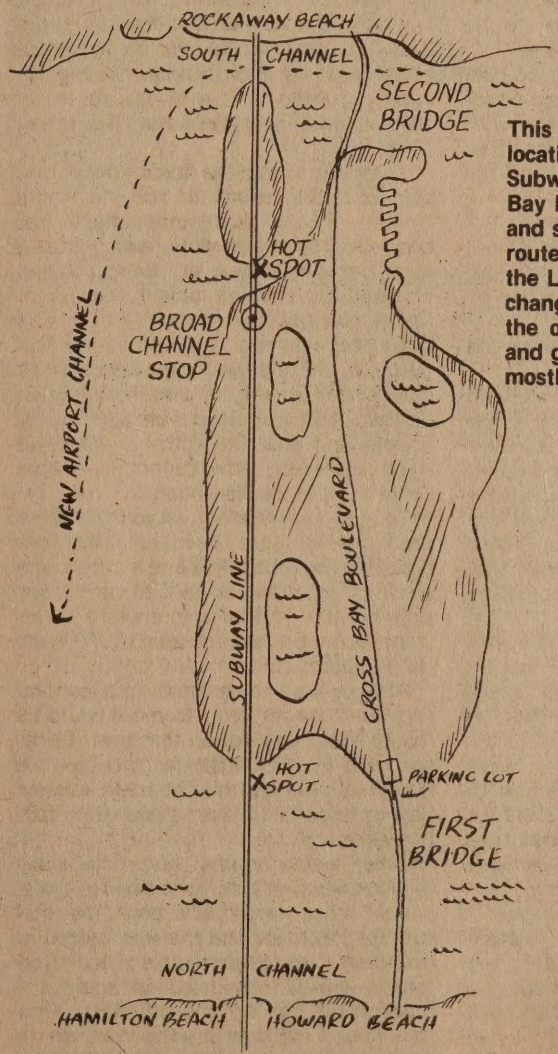
Miracle of miracles! My favorite patch of tracks was not covered by sand. Simply replaced by concrete, steel, two lines of track and two third rails. The channel opening was moved to the extreme south end. Up against Rockaway Beach. In between my "hot spots" and the channel was a sand island. The only other part where the tracks went across open water was on the Howard Beach side, which I also explored with a couple dozen sandworms.

Construction time for all this was about two years. Meanwhile for some reasons, like fishing in Montauk and travel, I was only in New York after and before the bass season. Then, possibly because of further schooling, I found myself in the vicinity of N.Y.C. during the bass season. Since I didn't have the money, or the time required for a boat, I had to try out the new tracks. The shrimp chummers were taking bass in the same area. Marine growth covered the pilings now, and sandworms were only 60 cents a dozen. So what the hell. I was young and bass crazy. No A train express roaring down the tracks in the middle of the night was about to frighten me. Any obstacle is surmountable with enough desire and ambition. How to do it was the problem.

As the tracks began to cross the water from the land, a high cyclone fence with a barbed wire top made a formidable barrier. At the point where the fence ended, it was 6 feet off the ground. You needed both hands to climb up to the top of the tracks which was about 10 feet high. What I did was loop the bucktail into the fence mesh, let the rod hang and climb up hand over hand. Once up on the tracks I would pull the rod. Another method of entering was by paying a fare at the Broad Channel station that was only a half block or so from where the water began. Just walk the platform to the end, down the little staircase, (there is one on the end of every subway platform) and continue on over the water. This was a lot easier, but the chances of being spotted by the coin collector, whose booth was above the tracks was far greater. So I kept it difficult and played it safe.

Once up on the tracks. the world around changed. As I looked south down the shiny rails, with the bright glow of the station lights behind me, I was overcome with an eerie feeling of solitude. This never changed, even with constant exposure. Although surrounded by civilization I was alone. Just me and the I.N.D.

On the warm moist summer nights with a gentle south wind blowing I was very aware of the civilization about me. Yet, not part of it. My only reality was an awareness of the 'A' train that came charging down upon me. I could hear all the sounds of society driftring my way on the wind from Rockaway Beach. It reminded me of when I was a kid, trying to sleep on hot summer nights with the windows open. Before the days of air conditioning. Police sirens, young kids with hot cars leaving rubber, even the elevated subway train a long way off in Edgemere leaving the station. Now as I look back it seems neither of us belonged to that world. Myself or the fish. The frightening sound of the steel wheels or a subway train screaming its way towards Manhattan. Only 3 feet from your ear. Not at all like the classic image of the tranquil pleasure of fishing. Not at all.



This map shows the present location of the Independent Subway Line in relation to Cross Bay Boulevard. The new cement and steel tracks follow the same route as the old wooden tracks of the Long Island Railroad. A major change was the fill—in. Originally the old tracks ran over all water and green marsh areas. It is now mostly sand.

Sinker Bouncing with Matt Ahern

SPRING BLACKFISH

When our skiff entered the mouth of Island Park's Schaeffer's Creek, I cut the speed and awaited further directions from my fishing buddy, Nick Hauck.

He motioned to me to pull ahead.

"Closer to shore, and watch the wind."

Our intention on this blustery early-in-April morning was to anchor over a bit of wreckage Nick had discovered while flounder fishing the week before. We hoped it might possibly become a good spring blackfishing spot.

Seconds later the anchor was on its way through twenty feet of water and I threw the ten-horse into reverse.

"That's good!" Nick called as he made fast the line. "Hold it there."

I killed the engine, braced myself against the chilling wind and reached for my rod and baited the two hooks with sliced skimmer. Putting the reel into free spool, I let the two ounce sinker find the bottom.

Minutes passed, Nothing...then...

Tap! Tap! Tap! Bergalls. Well, where there's bergalls...I reeled in and re-baited. Nick glanced my way. "Hung up yet?"

I shook my head, no. "We're off the spot."

"It's the damn wind. Swung us right off. We'll make a move. With those bergalls around, I know we're close by."

This time we hit it right on the button, and to prove it, Nick swung aboard a scrappy two pound black. He tossed it in the bucket and reached for more skimmer. "Better steady us with that stern anchor. Maybe we'll do ourselves some good."

He got another about the same size before I set a hook into my first fish—a throw back. Then I got a decent black also about two pounds, and from then on we had a slow but steady pick.

When quitting time came, we were minus a half-dozen rigs, but we had 16 blacks from one and a half to nearly four pounds. Not bad for starters. I was sure we would get more as the season progressed.

As can be seen from the foregoing, and when compared to most bottom fishing, finding and catching blackfish is an exact science. Miss the right spot by just a few feet as we did at first, and you'll catch few blackfish.

To be a good blackfisherman, the angler must know his fish. He's got to be on the ball. Make no mistake about it, the guy who consistently catches blackfish is a bottom fisherman par excellence and I doff my fishing cap to him: he's the elite of the bottom fishing clan.

I say this because in order to become such a good fisherman, I believe without a doubt that this fellow has made a study of fish over the years—whether he's aware of it or not. As an example, this fisherman is always intensely interested in his quarry and he has but to look at any of our local species to seek a clue to its way of life.

You may be sure that when he looks at a mackerel's streamlined, racy shape, for instance, he knows that there is a fish suited for the fast, action-filled life of the open sea. And by the same token, when he considers the ling's sluggish appearance, he knows it's a tip-off as to its slow-swimming existence on the ocean floor.

Therefore, when he takes note of the black's solid, compact body with its smooth, tough skin, and deeply imbedded scales, its thick, rubbery lips and small mouth lined with strong, chisel-like teeth, he's certain blackfish won't be found scattered over open bottom like fluke and flounder. For here is a fish nature had designed to live and browse about sunken wrecks and rock-strewn bottom, breakwaters, old decayed piers, wharfs and sea walls. If he wants to catch blackfish, this fisherman knows these are the places to fish.

To the uninitiated, blackfish often prove to be their Nemesis. Not that blackfish are difficult to catch in the true sense of the word—they just take more skill on the part of the angler. What works for most bottom fish won't work on the black.

Although a willing biter, and not the least bit line-shy, the black is a tricky fish to hook. One fisherman told me that the time to hook a black is before he bites. Of course, this was his way of paying tribute to the speed this fish posseses.

When a fisherman feels the light tug of a flounder, or the rapid-fire nips of a porgy, most times he'll hook his fish without much difficulty. Not so with the blackfish. To attempt to do so often results in a bait-less hook, or at best, a black that is lightly hooked. This lip-hooking isn't too bad if the fish is small, but if the black is large, the outcome is often doubtful. I've caught some good-sized blacks that were lip-hooked, but results are much better if that hook is planted deep inside the jaws.

To do that, the fisherman should never attempt to hook a black that is pecking away at the bait. Wait for a good, solid tug. That's your signal to rear back on the rod and sock it to him good.

There's good reason for this heavy-handed action: the black is a powerful fish for his size and you've got to get him started away from the bottom before he's aware he's in trouble. If you don't, he's sure to dive for the worst part of the obstruction and some part of your terminal tackle is sure to become fouled. Usually, this means a lost fish, plus the tackle.

The thorn in blackfishing is the pesty, bait-stealing bergall. They are the bane of all blackfishermen and seldom will you find one without the other nearby. Bergalls have their good points, though. If you're being annoyed by them, you have an excellent chance of catching blackfish, for they often call attention to the baited hook.

It is difficult for the novice to refrain from stabbing away at these pests, but you'll notice the veteran blackfisherman takes it in stride. He doesn't allow himself to be distracted; he's too busy concentrating on that slightly heavier bite, which signals the presence of a black.

This is where experience pays off. The only way the beginner will gain this experience is by paying attention to what's going on down below. He must learn to distinguish between the light tapping of a bergall and the stronger bite of the blackfish. Patience is the key word when blackfishing—truly a case of mind over matter.

Blackfish are highly suspicious of unnatural motion and they won't go near a bait that is constantly dancing before them—so keep that line still.

If the bergalls suddenly cease, it can mean one of two things: the bait is gone, or a black is homing in on what looks like easy pickings. Either way, you'll soon find out.

Hooking blackfish isn't difficult if the fisherman keeps the following in mind.

Most fish have but one set of teeth, but the blackfish has two. This is why fishermen overlooking this fact have trouble hooking these fish. The front set, called nippers, are used to dislodge barnacles, mussels, crabs, etc. from

their moorings. If you strike while this nipping takes place, you stand an excellent chance of missing.

But located near the throat is another set called crushers. These are used to pulverize the hard shell of its victim before swallowing. When the hook is passed back to this area, you will immediately know it by a sudden, strong yank from the fish. This is the time to strike—hard!

This is how experienced fishermen catch blackfish. It's as simple as that. Use this bit of information and watch your catch increase. It always works.

Tackle requirements for blackfish are always on the medium to heavy side, depending upon where the fishing is being done, depth of water, etc. It isn't necessary to use codfishing tackle, but light tackle leaves much to be desired.

I enjoy using light spinning tackle, but not for blackfish. If the water is shallow, medium weight spinning stuff will get by, but when fishing the deeper waters of the ocean or Sound, the fisherman will find the stiffer boat rod and conventional reel putting more fish in the bucket.

The reel should be well made because it's going to have to take it. I've been using the same Penn 155 for thirty-five years with no sign of its quitting and never once has it needed repair—a plus for American-made tackle.

Fill your reel with twenty or thirty pound test good-quality mono. If you invest in cheap mono, you'll lose more terminal tackle than necessary. It pays to use the best tackle you can afford.

Blackfishing is often considered to be a specialized form of angling. Some shrewd long-ago fisherman believed this and designed a special hook to make it easier. This hook is extra-strong with a short-biting offset hollow point and barb. It's known as the Virginia Blackfish hook and is the one to use if you're serious about your blackfishing.

Hook size to use depends much upon where you fish. For instance, a number eight will do, but in deeper waters where large fish can be expected, a number five or six is best. I know some fishermen who use number two or three in these places, but I've never found it necessary to do so.

Two hooks are used by most fishermen and these should be tandem-tied and placed two inches above the sinker. To tandem-tie simply fold the snell of one hook at its middle, then pass this fold through the knotted loop of the second hook. This second hook is then passed through the first fold, pulled tightly and secured with an overhand knot. Takes but seconds.

If the bottom you're fishing is really "sticky", it's best to use one hook. Be sure to carry extra hooks and sinkers; remember, if you're not being hung-up occasionally, you're not in a choice blackfish area. The mortality rate on terminal tackle may be quite high, so expect to lose a certain amount.

Precise sinker weight can't be given as too many factors enter into its selection. Just be sure your sinker is heavy enough to hold bottom without moving in the slightest. Be sure to pay attention to this important detail as sinker weight may not only vary from day to day, but hour to hour. The bank style is usually preferred by fishermen as its tear drop shape helps to slide past many minor obstructions.

Forget swivels. They aren't necessary and I consider them only an aid toward getting fouled.

Not only can blackfish be exasperating when the angler attempts to set the hook, they can also drive him up a wall when selecting his bait. There are two schools of thought on this all-important subject. Just keep in mind that whatever has or had a shell around it makes a good blackfish bait isn't enough.

The fisherman must take into consideration the season of the year blackfish are being sought. When spring blackfishing, many blackfish are taken with sliced skimmer. During fall, pieces of crab, or whole china-back fiddlers seem to work better. But this is not a hard, fast rule. I've caught some nice blacks on crab in spring, and some dandies in fall with sliced skimmers. It seems, though, that during spring skimmer works well on the inshore grounds and both baits bring good results on the offshore wrecks and rock-cluttered banks—with a slight edge favoring the skimmer.

If you use skimmer, be sure to cut into two inch slices, not too thin. Better results are obtained if some of the soft belly remains with each piece of bait.

Because of the black's life-style, these fish are plentiful. Our "friendly", detente-happy foreign fishing fleet has not found a way to get to them yet, So if you want to get yourself a mess of scrappy blackfish, go out on a party boat, or team up with an experienced fisherman and give them a whirl. You may find other bottom fish pale by comparison.

Blackfishing as a sport is hard to beat.

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Light Tackling Blackfish

by Capt. Ron Onorato

We had barely put the light spinning rods into the skiff when a couple of fishermen from the next boat came over and glanced at our tackle. "You really don't think you're going to catch blacks on that tackle" commented one of them. From the size of the outfits these gents had, it was obvious that they were "heavers and haulers". Their tackle selection would be more suited for codfishing.

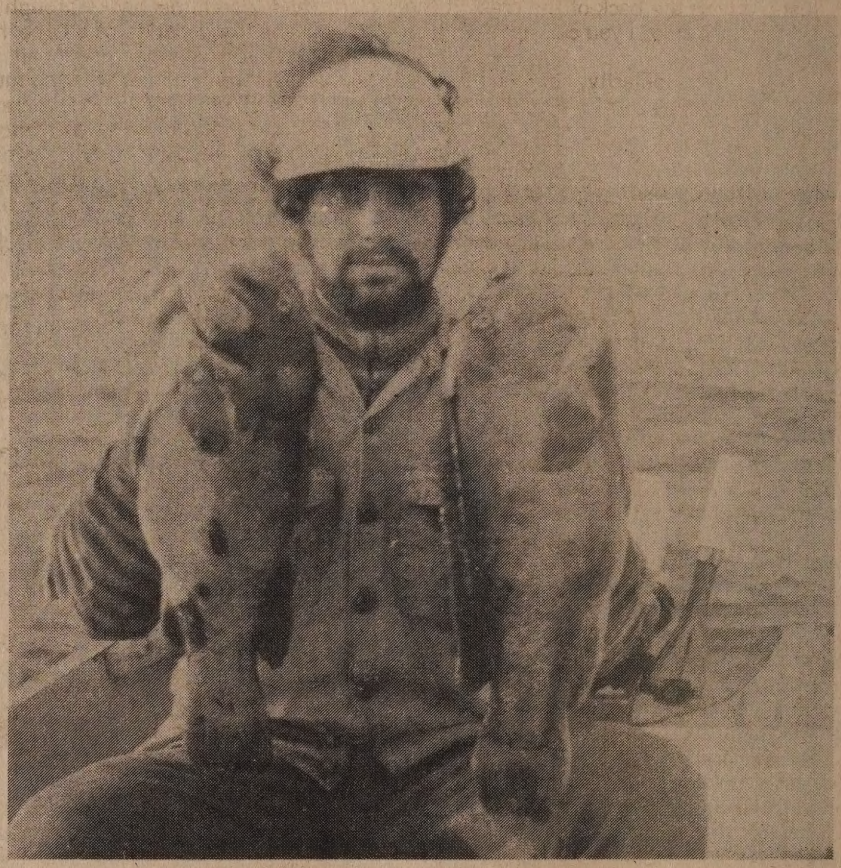
Rather than argue the merits of our case, we simply told them that we were going for flounder. However at the end of the day when we both returned to the fishing station, it was more than flounders that we had in our boat. This fellow who had commented earlier on our tackle nearly fell over when he saw our catch of "flounders". We had about 30 of the nicest blacks you would want to see. Not a fish of less than 3 pounds and several were close to 10 pounds, filled the bushel basket. His catch was just fair and he refused to believe that we caught them on such light spinning rods.

Mention blackfish to the average bottom bouncer and right away he thinks of heavy tackle with heavy line. But, this is not the way it has to be. Fish can be caught on spinning rods of modest nature, and the need for heavy line isn't always the case.

Blackfish, by their nature, require a rocky, broken bottom as their foraging area. Mussel beds, wrecks, rocks and reefs are the homes of the blackfish. Nature equipped the black with a rather substantial set of teeth for the purpose of feeding on such food as crabs, mussels, barnacles and clams. These baits are found in the rocks and wrecks, and thereby attract the black.

On Long Island, there is a wealth of habitats for the blackfish on both the North and South shores. Long Island Sound is one of the most extensive natural blackfish feeding grounds on the entire East Coast. From Manhasset Bay all the way to Wading river on the North Fork, there are acres of rocky areas that are all loaded with blacks. On the South Shore, almost all of the bridges hold blacks and the artificial reef off Fire Island in Great South Bay is one of the finest blackfish structures around. In the ocean, many of the inshore wrecks off Jones and Long Beach are good bets.

The argument for heavy tackle is pretty much the same every time. It's advocates say in order to keep a black from going into the rocks or the wreck you need heavy tackle. This is only true part of the time. The only time I have found blacks doing this is when wreck or reef fishing in the ocean. However, because of the water depth and current, light tackle is out of the question anyway.



Author with a pair of hefty blacks caught on light tackle.

When fishing in the Sound, or in the bay, you can get by with the light stuff when the current isn't too strong or you have to use heavy sinkers. Up in the Sound, there are times when you will be fishing for blacks in 8 and 10 feet of water and there will scarcely be a current. This is the time for breaking out the light spinning rods.

My selection for blackfishing is the same as the one I use for casting for weakfish. This is a light action fresh water rod 6½ feet in length. A matching reel with 10 pound test mono is all you need. As long as the line is in good shape 10 pound test ought to handle the job.

Terminal tackle can be kept the same regardless of what tackle you use. The Virginia style hook is the most popular type of hook for blacks, though the Sproat type hook is also used by a number of fishermen. A good size to use is the #6 Virginia. This size will take both large and small blacks.

Terminal rigging is relatively easy. I use a large size snap swivel tied to the terminal end of the mono. The sinker and the hook are then both attached to the swivel. This keeps the baited hook right on the bottom and by using the snap swivel, there is no line twist.

You can use either one or two hooks depending on conditions. For example if you are fishing in an area where you are using and losing a lot of rigs, the single hook is better. If the blacks are running on the large size, it pays to stay with the single hook in the event you hook a big fish, the other hook may snag onto a rock or obstruction and lose everything. If the blacks are on the small side and the bottom isn't too rough, then you can get by with the two hooks. When using two hooks, simply tie one hook to the

middle of the leader of the first hook.

As mentioned earlier, blacks will feed mainly on crabs and clams. These therefore, are the best baits to use when tempting the black. Fiddler crabs are the most easily acquired bait. They are used one to a hook. I usually break off the big claw and then insert the hook through this opening with the barb of the hook just piercing the back of the crab. If the fiddlers are small, you can use two to a hook.

Next in popularity, but somewhat more expensive and hard to get, is the green crab. The green crab is a better bait for the bigger blacks. Small blacks have a tough time swallowing a green crab half. The green crab is first cut in half, and then the back shell removed. All the legs are cut off, and you insert the hook through one of the leg sockets and bury it in the body of the crab. This is an especially effective bait for thwarting the attempts of the bergalls at stealing your bait.

Blackfish will take a wide variety of soft baits, but the thing that limits their effectiveness, is the intensity of the bergalls. These cousins of the black make short work of any soft bait such as worms, clams and mussels. An especially good soft bait to use is the conch. This is used by party boat fishermen seeking codfish on the wrecks when the bergalls are heavy. A tiny sliver of conch meat on a hook makes a super blackfish bait that is virtually impossible to remove.

A very good bait that is used very little, is the steamer clam. I usually go to the fish market and hand pick a couple of pounds of the smallest steamers I can find. When ready to fish, I smash the clam, and insert the hook through the broken shell and out through the hard tongue. This is another good bait that the bergalls won't bother with too much.

A blackfish will usually take a crab in his lips, and then slowly move it into his mouth where he will crush it with his teeth. This is when you will feel a series of bites. The first bite is when the black is picking up the crab, and the next bite is the crunching bite. For this reason, you should always try to wait for the second bite before striking the fish. If you are using a soft bait, then you can hit the fish on the first bite.

Perhaps the most important aspect of blackfishing is precise location. Only a certain portion of a mussel bed or reef will hold fish, and the blacks won't range far. If you're off the good piece by a few feet, you may not take a fish. Anchor you boat right on it, and you will get tired pulling fish. A good rule of thumb is, if you don't get a black within ten minutes, and the tide isn't slack, try another spot. In almost all cases, the blacks usually grab a bait right away.

With heavy tackle, you simply screw the drag up and reel in the fish. Not so with the spinning rods. There is not so much pressure that you will exert with 10 pound line before she goes. Therefore, try to keep the drag setting at about half the breaking strength of the line. This is enough pressure to set the hook, and should be enough to land the average fish. If you hook a big fish, you can slack off on the drag as needed.

I have lost a few fish to the rocks with the light gear. By keeping the rod tip as high as possible, the black usually doesn't have a chance to get his bearings for a few seconds. In that time he will be well away from the bottom. If he does get into the rocks and cut me off, that's the breaks. The Virginia hook will rust out his mouth very shortly if he isn't gut hooked. Most blacks are lip hooked anyway.

Blackfish are extremely hard fighters and make excellent table fare. Their meat is soft, flaky type and they go well when prepared in salads. Those big blackfish heads also make some very fine fish chowder.

To those of you who have used the "heave and haul" method, when the conditions are right, give the light tackle a try and see what you think of it.

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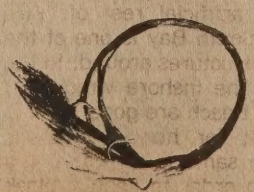

Blackfishing In North Brookhaven

by Tom Vande Kieft

For most of us the fishing season has started once again, I say most of us because I exclude those hearty people who fish all winter long. This past season was prolonged a few weeks due to the warm weather extending well into fall, giving us a shorter winter hiatus.

During this layover, aside from cleaning my fishing gear, repairing rods, lures, etc. I go to the areas I intend to fish during the forthcoming season and inspect them at low tide. I do this at low water so I can see any rocks, jetties, mussel beds, and other fish harboring objects that are exposed at low tide, but may be covered at high tide. I generally make a very detailed map of the area so that I can find these rocks, jetties, etc., by lining up one or two fixed objects on land. This map comes in handy all season long, not only for blues and stripers, but also for blackfish.

I do most of my blackfishing on the north shore beaches at Cedar Beach, Miller Place, Rocky Point and Wading River. Although the bottoms are very rocky here, the beaches are generally flat and easy to fish from. Some of these areas have private property markings, however I have never had any problems of access in the spring and fall, while in the summer these restrictions are enforced. There are many dead end roads that stop at the waters edge and are accessible all year long at these locations. Cedar Beach, which is on the east side of Mt. Sinai Harbor, is the easiest of these areas to fish. It has a large parking lot a hundred feet from the waters edge, so you don't have to load yourself down with gear to take to the waters edge. Just take the necessary equipment to the beach and leave any unnecessary items in the car. The beach has a rocky bottom, but surprisingly, I have not lost many rigs here. The rocks seem to be on the smaller side and do not cause many snared rigs to be lost. There is one small drawback to this area and that is after about an hour to an hour and a half of the outgoing tide, the water in this area contains seaweed and swamp grass from the nearby harbor. However, it is still fishable. At the west end of the beach at the harbor entrance is a fishing pier and jetty that was built by the Town of Brookhaven. I fish from the jetty because I don't want to pull a decent size fish up the fifteen feet or so from the water to the pier. Due to the currents here, the seaweed from the harbor seems to bypass this area. On the west side of the harbor is a long rocky jetty that is hard to reach by land, but can be fished from a boat very easily. Due to its difficulty to reach by land, it is probably underfished, so boatowners take note. If you plan to fish here get there early to insure yourself a fishing spot. A residential permit is needed during the period from Memorial Day to Labor Day for entrance to the beach.

The other areas I have mentioned must be fished by finding and parking along roads that end at the waters edge. Get yourself a local map or even a gas station map which will be adequate, and you will be able to find these roads. Miller Place, Rocky Point and Wading River are almost identical in most respects. All have boulders sticking out of the water, so even the newcomer to the area should be able to find a place that harbors this quarry. A good number of these rocks are within casting distance, but a few are well offshore, so boat owners beware. At these locations you may have to walk a little more than at Cedar Beach, but it will be less crowded and just as rewarding.

At all these places, I have caught blackfish on all tides, but the most productive is the two to three hours before high tide. I use blackfish hooks from #4 through 1/0 Carlisle, but tend to stay in the smaller hook range when fishing with worms or clams. The reason for this is because there is a chance of picking up flounder. When fishing with crab, I use a 1/0 hook, so I know the barb is through the crab and ready to be set. As far as baits, I have used sandworms, steamer or soft shell clams, and green crabs and have had the worms outproduce the other two baits. However, with different conditions, the fish may be on a diet of worms one week and prefer crab the next week. At this time of year the average fish weighs four to six pounds, with some going into double figures. A word of caution when fishing for these bulldogs from shore and using a sand spike for your pole. Be sure to set the drag at zero or very light, for I have seen these fish pull pole and sand spike down. If this should happen, rinse the reel in the water and hope that the sand did not damage or jam the moving parts and the fish did not go into hiding, or worse yet get away.

And now a word of advice to those people who are going blackfishing for the first time. Don't get aggravated if the person ten feet away is pulling in fish faster than he can bait his hook, and you are going fishless. This is one of the disadvantages of blackfishing. Last year I had seen a husband and wife fishing and she outfished him by about six fish and twice as many hits to his none, and he was no more than eight feet from her. She was fortunate enough to be fishing around a rock, mussel bed, submerged object, or food source that was attractive to the fish.

Try the above areas, and some of those fishless fishing trips (of which there seem to be too many) may be over for awhile.

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TAUTOG:
Creole Style! by Claire Glas

Whether you call them by their Algonquin name, Tautog, or know them simply as blackfish, this northern member of the wrasse family of fishes lends itself to superb cuisine.

Any experienced party boat fisherman knows that the waters in the Block Island area offer a veritable smorgasbord of fish in the spring of the year, with cod, pollack, blackfish and some snowshoe flounders on the menu. However, when it comes to using the Tautog, many anglers have the "if it is not a cod, I don't know what to do with it" attitude, and simply give their blackfish catch away.

What they don't realize is that they are also giving away the basis of a super-duper gourmet dish. Yes, Virginia, there's something more to fish cookery than fried, baked or broiled codfish. Deep sea tautogs are usually pretty hefty, and as they can weigh anywhere from three to eight pounds, provide excellent fillets. By combining the fillets of this New England deep sea blackfish with some deep south style cookery, we come up with a Connecticut Tautog Gumbo that rivals any Louisiana creole gumbo in delicious flavor.

Besides the 1½ to 2 pounds of tautog fillet needed to produce a gumbo ample enough to feed a family of four hearty eaters, the following ingredients are needed to start your new adventure in creole cooking:

Okra—1 10 oz. package, frozen or 1 can.
Onions—1 medium Bermuda and 1 small red.
Green pepper—1 medium
Celery—3 to 4 stems
Red radish—4 medium
Bacon—¼ pound.
Tomatoes—whole canned 1 pound.
Thyme, oregano, garlic (powder or pod) parsley flakes, salt.
Rice

Okra is the key ingredient in creating a flavorful gumbo, but if you have never used these pods before, a few hints are in order. In using frozen sliced okra (its virtually impossible to find the fresh variety in these parts) defrost the package only to the point that the slices begin to separate. Lightly grease a skillet, put in the okra, and brown over medium heat. A note of caution: never use an iron pan or pot in making gumbo, as it will turn the gumbo black.

The okra will start to get sticky, oozing a blue-like substance, so that it is necessary to keep the slices moving with a spatula to prevent their sticking. As the gooey substance begins to dry out, the okra starts to brown and sticks less frequently; it can be considered done when it no longer sticks. Canned okra must be well drained before you start the browning process. Why? Well, here's something that no cook book will ever tell you. Never, but never use the liquid from a can of okra in your cooking. It has the power of a megaton of Ex Lax!

While the okra is browning, break out a large stew pot, preferably of the Dutch Oven variety, and get the other ingredients started. Dice the bacon, set it sizzling and as it begins to cook add the chopped onions letting them brown in the bacon fat. While it isn't absolutely necessary to have two different kinds of onions, each type has a special flavor of its own, and the combination enhances the bouquet. As the onions start to brown, the diced green pepper should be added.

Once these ingredients have browned, gradually add about a cup of water and set the pot on simmer. Add the okra, diced celery, sliced red radishes, and the tomatoes, including the juice. Although you will be using about a quart and a half of water in this recipe, just add it a little at a time. Suddenly "drowning" the cooking also drowns the flavor.

The herbs come next. Several pinches each of Thyme, parsley flakes, and a little touch of oregano leaves, all rubbed fine; plus a dash of garlic powder (if you don't like to use the fresh pod), and a light sprinkling of salt. Now we're ready for the tautog.

Cut the fillets into chunks about 2 inches square, place them on top of the gumbo mixture; and before stirring them in, sprinkle the chunks of fish with salt, and add another pinch each of the herbs. Now stir in the blackfish and allow the gumbo to simmer on very low heat. The tautog will soon start to flake apart and blend with the rest of the ingredients.

While the gumbo simmers, all that you have to do is prepare some white rice in time to serve with the meal. If you can manage to find some Gumbo File, a spice that consists of ground sassafrass and thyme, stir a teaspoonful into the gumbo just before serving.

A bowl of Connecticut Tautog Gumbo, served with a heaping tablespoon or two or rice, with some sea rounds or pilot crackers on the side, makes a superb main course.

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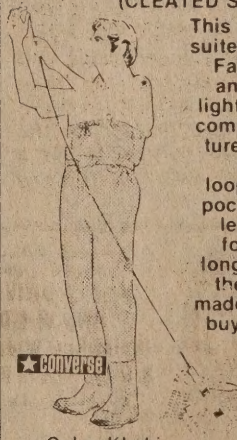

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Locating Striped Bass

Part I

by Leonard S. Baum

NOTE: *"c Leonard S. Baum, 1976, certain material contained in this article constitute excerpts from a forthcoming book on striped bass fishing being written by Capt. Ronald Lepper and Leonard S. Baum."*

On October 23rd, 1973 I was tearing my hair out. After four long consecutive days of trolling bunker spoons and dunking bunker the length of Jones Beach, I hadn't hooked a single striped bass. Worse yet, the sharpies were murdering cow bass topped by famed Ronnie Lepper's catch of 15 fish from 20 to 35 pounds that very day. Since my entire fall season had been a washout I dropped my pride, consulted the phone book and called Capt. Lepper to find out what I was doing wrong. His advice payed off in a 38 pounder the very next day, but more importantly, it marked the beginning of a relationship in which I have had the privilege of participating in a joint project of writing an authentic and modern book on striped bass fishing; a project that had begun and aborted with the untimely and tragic death of the great Al Reinfelder. Since then Ronnie and I have spent countless hours memorializing the wealth of knowledge he has accumulated over the last twenty five years and in researching and reviewing every aspect of big bass fishing.

In writing the book we tried to approach the subject from the viewpoint of a novice, someone who had caught few, if any stripers; someone who was restricted to fishing weekends, or at least unable to spend endless days and nights in search of bass. One thing was plain, the novice was confronted with the same threshold problem facing the expert; how to locate the bass. Simply put, you can't catch what you can't find. And make no mistake about it, whether you prefer twitching a popper along a quiet marsh bank or bucktailing your arm off in a chasing rip, regardless of how you prefer to fish, locating bass is one of the toughest elements of bass fishing.

The easiest way to locate bass is to hire yourself an experienced bass guide, someone who will share years of experience for a fee, or a top flight amateur who may do the same for friendship's sake. But the former can be expensive and often are restricted to a particular type of fishing in a few areas. The latter are as rare as hen's teeth.

George Fearon with his first lunker; an early spring bunker spoon catch by the Highlands Bridge.

Also, after that first fish or two most anglers prefer the challenge and satisfaction of luring and landing their own trophies. By comparison our fresh water brethen have it made. On any trout stream, a reasonably accomplished angler can read the currents and determine by depth and structure where the old soakers should be. If you hit the stream during a hatch of aquatic insects, a dreamfish even may make a bold appearance in full view. Similarly, once you have learned the bottom structure and spawning areas of a bass lake, you can count on fish being there year after year. Stripers, however, are wanderers, moving through wide expanses of water. Along much of the bass range, most big fish are available during the spring and fall migration runs. However, a fair number of lunkers find summer homes along the entire coast. These fish often prowl for easy pickings at bait concentration points; points that may change from week to week; day to day, or tide to tide. Even during the migration runs stretches of beach can produce for consecutive weeks, or years, and then drop dead. To be successful, a bassman must learn those stretches of beach, reefs, rips, holes, and tides that produce best in the general area he will be fishing.

In the middle Atlantic area there are perenial hot spots such as the Highlands Sandy Hook or Montauk. But these areas encompass many square miles. There are dozens of specific locations within these general areas and hundreds more both close and far removed. The question is how do you find these areas; when should you fish them and what are the most productive techniques and baits.

In deciding where to fish, you must first determine if you are after lunkers or schoolies since the angling location, tackle and techniques differ depending on the quarry. After making that decision, there is a scientific way to approach the task. In our book we recommend reference to certain obvious sources of information such as local newspapers, tackle shops, and fishing periodicals, together with the use of National Ocean Survey maps. These maps can be of critical importance to novices and experts alike. Maps of the general and specific areas discussed in this article can be found in Nautical Chart Catalog 1 of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Department of Commerce. The catalog and charts therein mentioned can be purchased through the Distribution Division C44, National Ocean Survey, Riverdale, Maryland 20840. They also can be purchased from numerous marine and sporting goods supply houses and from stores such as Hammond Map Store, 10 East 41st street, New York, New York

10017. We stress the importance of maintaining and consulting a diary.

The secret of many pros is the accumulation of experiences gained on many trips over many years; the ability to recall where the fish appeared under certain conditions year after year. But for the novice, there are no diaries of experiences to consult, and the obvious sources of information sometimes are incomplete, or not up to date or just plain closemouthed. So we concluded, why not consult a *super diary* showing the best places to fish, the most consistent lures and baits, and the best time to fish. How? Well even the sharpest sharpie can't keep his catches secret forever. Also, non-professionals weigh in many fish and often reveal the time, general place and method. Charter captains report catches for obvious reasons and they can't afford to mistake the location of the catches because ofteh they are in full view of many other boats, so right then and there there is plenty of info about the date, general place, method and number and size of fish caught. This information is regularly reported to and printed by the **New Jersey, Long Island and Connecticut/Rhode Island Fisherman.** Furthermore, although lures or baits are kept quiet, you would be surprised to find out how often accurate "secret" information appears in print.

Our recommendation was for avid bass hounds to spend a winter in the library, reviewing fishing columns that were written during the previous several years. Allow a "lag time" for the information to get into print. (average 7 days for the fisherman) and reconstruct a diary based on as many catches as are reported. As a reader of Frank Keating's column in the Long Island Press, and of the **New Jersey and Long Island Fisherman** I knew these reports to be quite accurate. How? I summarized three years of reports in these publications and compared them to personal diary entries. The diary entries of Ronnie Lepper and information developed from unimpeachable sources were also summarized. Of course there were instances of inaccurate information, but not enough to alter the patterns that emerged; and those patterns, once learned, should greatly enhance your chances for success.

Before proceeding further a few basic points should be understood. First this short article can't possibly relate the wealth of detail that was accumulated in my tri-state super diary. Also, merely identiftying an area such as Sandy Hook or Montauk is not sufficient for the novice. The Hook encompasses many square miles, from the tip of the Hook (best during the first 2 hours of the ebb) to the #1 can or near the now removed "Golf Ball" to the south. The Highlands cover several miles from the beach to the 50' mark. At Shrewsbury Rocks, Flynn's Knoll, Romar Shoals, Tin Can Grounds, Montauk or the Race, often the only way to catch fish on a particular day (or week) is by following one narrow trolling run. It would be impossible to diagram the most consistent runs at each spot and of course, that information rarely, if ever, appears in print. Nevertheless, once you pinpoint a general area; study it on a map to become familiar with its buoys, landmarks, and underwater reefs, and then spend some time observing the methods and patterns of other anglers in the area. The pieces will all fall into place quite quickly. One of the tricks is to spend time at each area during its peak period; don't hit and run. Do charter boats appear from nowhere at the tip of the Hook on one stage of the tide and disappear two hours later? Where do they then head? Does a mosquito fleet of bunker dunkers, eel and worm drifters invade an inlet during each evening ebb tide? There's usually a good reason for it. One of the objects of our book is to explain all of these details.

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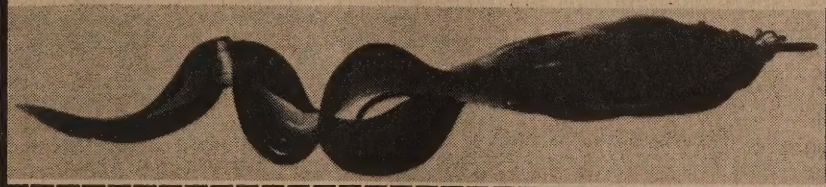

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Robert Niven and his daughter. Laura with their catch of weakfish weighing 9 and 6 lbs. The fish were caught off Ocean Beach.

SOUTH SHORE Fishing Report

MONTAUK

Capt. Bud Dorman of the **Viking Skipper II** said that he is still fishing the Block Island area and is finding the cod in tight. The fishing is pretty much the same as last week but there hasn't been any pollack around to speak of. All anglers are going home with an average of 4 to 8 cod ranging from 4 to 15 pounds. The poolfish on Sunday was a 15 pound pollack taken on a clam bait. The cod are all spitting up sandeels, so Buddy suggested that it might be a good idea for anglers to bring their own sandeels with them to try for codfish bait.

Ronnie D'Albora of the **Gone Fishing Marina** told us that the flounder fishing in Lake Montauk has been nothing more than outstanding. The rental skiffs from the marina are averaging 30 to 40 flounder a man, and the fish are a healthy 1 to 1½ pounds with an occasional 2 pounder thrown in. Forget about snowshoe flounders, however. They just aren't around. There is no life at all on Washington Shoals and there are virtually no cod in close. Whiting are being taken around the bell buoy right outside the jetties. Ronnie told us that they are doing an extensive remodeling job on their launching ramp and it will be the best launching ramp on the east end of the Island when it is completed in the near future.

Capt. Brad Glas of the **Helen II** told us that the codifshing wasn't very good on Saturday even though there were plenty of fish showing up on the recorder around the Block Island area. The fish are still there but seem to be off their feed for one reason or another. Brad said that he still has a few openings left for the weekend of May 29th for fluke, then go to their weekday open boat schedule for fluke. As of July 1st, the boat will be sailing daily and weekends for fluke and sometime around mid-August will switch over to open boat fishing for the Monster Montauk Bluefish as in the past.

This past Wednesday the L.I.F. Staff sailed a charter on Captain Paul Sundberg's **Montauk**. A good number of cod were taken along with one 22 pound pollack which was diamond jigged. All the action occured off Block Island. Big fish of the day was a 34 pound cod taken by ad man Stu Miller who also bagged the pollack. The big cod broke Stu's rod in front of the reel seat, and LIF publisher Rich Reina held the rod while battling Stu held the butt and reel and crank like crazy. The fish was finally brought to gaff and decked. It is officially known as L.I.F.'s Two-Man cod.

Montauk anglers will be happy to hear that Captain Ed "Spider" Hegner is again sailing, this time as a charterboat. Spider has come out of retirement and will be at the wheel of the charterboat **Web.** Good to have you back, Spider.

The charterboat **Free Spirit** has just gone into the water for the season and will be tying up at West Lake Fishing Station. There are some choice dates still open, Captain Frank advises.

Captain Lester Beehan of the **Peconic Queen III** called to report that there last Nantucket wreck trip had very good results even with the storm and fog in both directions. "Tons of Cod, too many to count" said Les. Bill Balance of Brooklyn took a $545 pool with a 62¾ lb. cod plus several others. Bob Jonz of Baumbrook N.J. took second prize with a 55 pound cod. There were a lot of fish over 50 pounds and it was the second time that the **Queen** had fished this wreck which is a good hours run past the Andria Doria. Fares banged away all day and loaded up during the 8 solid hours on this wreck. It took seven hours and 15 minutes to return, and the **Queen** arrived at 10:15 this past Monday night. Les says he still has a few openings for the May 23rd trip. He may also make a run on June 20th. A lot of the fish were 40 to 50 pounds and big big fish, mainly cod but also some big pollack for diamond jiggers. Les again says to remind everybody that these are not trips for beginners and are for those who are willing to face weather and seas in order to get into big fish.

Lou Diresta, Jerry De Sapio and Lou Perullo caught 46 flounders from 2-3¼ lbs. and 2 blacks of 5 and 6½ lbs. All the fish were taken near the Promised Land Fish Factory. Photo courtesy of the Promised Land Fishing Station.

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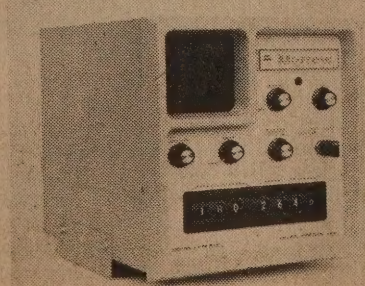

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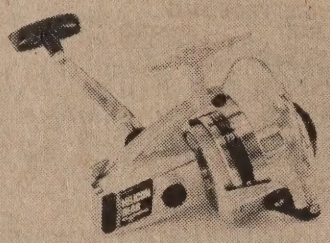

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Henry Schlanger of Mastic Beach caught these 50 flounder northwest of bouy 42 on bloodworms and mussel chum. Photo courtesy of Skidmore's Fishing Station.

PROMISED LAND

Art Brand at **Promised Land Fishing Station** said that there was a slow pick on flounder. This seems to be due primarily to the high winds that we have had this past week. Nice blackfish are being caught mixed in with the flounder. Your best spots are south of Cartwright, off Acabonac Harbor and east of Goff Point. The bait continues to be mussels for both bait and chum.

SAG HARBOR

Friday saw three Doctors (E. Mifford, N. Zarlengo, and C. Lovell) all clad in their foul weather gear drifting at buoy 16 and taking 19 weakfish between them on salty dogs with squid strips. On Sunday an 11½ pound fluke was taken off buoy 16 along with good catches of weakfish. The weakfish should be jumping by this weekend.

SHINNECOCK

According to Fred at **Altenkirch Tackle** the south end of Robins Island, Cows Neck and off the National Golf Course, is the best areas for weakfish in the Peconic. Theses weaks are being caught on all tides and ten to fifteen fish per boat is an average catch. Some of these fish have been as big as 6 pounds and are taken on tauts with squid. Beach fishing for the elusive striped bass continues to be poor. Small fluke have been taken in the canal when the gates are closed on sandeels.

HAMPTON BAYS

The East Channel near the inlet according to **Frank's Fishing Station** is where the fluke action has started. These fish are just over keeper size and are hitting sandeels at the top of the tide. Some of their marina boats have gone into the Peconic Bays after weakfish and have scored fairly well.

Skippers Fishing Station reports Saturday saw 8 keeper fluke taken in front of his place with blowfish and flounder taken to some extent at buoy 1. On Sunday Gary and Rich Braunstein took 27 weakfish, 2 to 9 pounds in the Peconics on Mr. Twisters at Cow's Neck. Joe Ferrara had 7 weakfish up to 9.2 pounds there also. He trolled fluke in the afternoon. Mike says that the weaks are in solid in Peconic and their bellies are full of grass shrimp and sandeels. Chumming with shrimp and casting a shrimp jig works well.

MORICHES BAY

Skidmore's Fishing Station reports good flounder fishing northeast of buoy 42. One to two pound fish are being caught in moving water using bloodworms with mussel chum. John says mussel chumming is a must. Some fluke are being taken at buoys 36 and 39. Although the keepers run 60 percent, these keeper fish are bigger than last year. Combination baits of squid, spearing and sandeels are best fished in moving water. At present flounder fishing is your best bet according to John.

Dick at **Seatuck Cove Marina** reports that even in the wind on Saturday 20 to 40 flounders and blowfish were the average catches for those using Stern Anchors and chumming heavily. Dick says that the flounder are big and fat and hitting bloodworms and mussel chum. Producing best are buoys 42 and 43 on the northside of the channel. The boats did well on flounder Sunday also. A few weakfish were taken over the weekend just west of the Westhampton Bridge casting shrimp jigs. Outgoing seems to be best for the flounder. Walter Eckoff on Saturday had 41 flounder fishing buoy 42.

MASTIC BEACH

Stiriz's Fishing Station reports good fluking at buoys 23, 24, and 25 on sandeels and squid. Also, good flounder fishing at buoy 21 on worms and mussels. Good weakfishing at the mouth of the Forge River on red and white Salty Dogs tipped with squid. Ben DePasquale bagged a 7 pound 4 ounce weak and a 4½ pound fluke. Bob Keim caught a 5 pound 11 ounce fluke, which was the largest of the weekend. Buoy 17 in the evening is a gathering spot for weakfish with a weakness for shrimp jigs.

John Halpin caught this 4 lb. seabass on a salty dog with squid by Ocean Beach. Photo courtesy of Wet-A-Line Bait and Tackle.

WEST SAYVILLE

Young's Fishing Station reports good catches of weakfish up to 6½ pounds, with grass shrimp chum doing a job. A. Gutieraes and H. Toledo had good catches on green salty dogs at buoy 2 on outgoing. The weekend saw a good number of fluke up to 2½ pounds taken between buoys 4 and 5.

South Bay Fishing Station reports the weakfishing has broken loose with buoys 29-30 just outside the channel producing best, for fish averaging 7 pounds. Largest of the week was 10½ pounds by Ed Mossman. Pink and white Salty Dogs tipped with squid worked near the bottom on a flooding tide seemed to work best. Fluke action at buoy 30 with squid strips or fluke belly and things are picking up.

OAKDALE

Howie's Fishing Station reports that on Wednesday a 7½ pound weak was taken at buoy 5 on a red shrimp jig on 8 pound test mono by angler Don Raynor. On Sunday 8 weakfish, 3 to 7½ pounds fell to Red Salty Dogs on incoming at buoy 12 for Jerry Curtain. Five fluke were taken at buoy 4 on worms by Fred Schwab.

EAST ISLIP

Don at **Wet-A-Line Bait and Tackle** in East Islip took a dozen weakfish at Heckscher's buoy 4 using shrimp chum and casting pink Salty Dogs. Lots of fluke at the inlet reports Don on Jig-N-Tails tipped with squid, drifting.

CAPTREE

Fluke fishing remained excellent all throughout the week in the Fire Island area from Kismet to the Robert Moses Bridge. There were some problems during mid-week with the tremendous amount of grass in the water due to the prolonged high winds, but the excellent run of fluke continues. The weakfish story, however, is another matter entirely. Although it looked like another great season a few weeks ago when the first catches of the season were made it has been downhill ever since. They just aren't around in enough numbers to make a day of fishing for them worthwhile, but this situation can change at any moment, and more than likely will have to by the time this report is read.

Both the **Jib V and Jib VI** have been doing a great job on the fluke. Fish are being taken off Kismet, the Lighthouse and all points inbetween.

Capt. Carl Bauer of the **Capt. Whittaker** confirmed the excellent fluke fishing from the Lighthouse to Robert Moses Bridge. Outgoing water has been most productive with sandeels or shiners as the best baits. About 70 percent of the fluke being taken are keepers and the poolfish is usually in the 3 to 4 pound class. As excellent as the fishing has been, it should be getting even better.

The **Captain Joseph Fleet** reports super mackerel fishing on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Anglers are taking all the macks they want from 6 to 10 miles south of the Inlet in 70 to 80 feet of water. Fluking has been excellent on both tides from Kismet to the Robert Moses Bridge.

Capt. George Tweedy of the **Capt. Scotty** confirmed the great fluke fishing being taken from the lighthouse and the Bridge. Over 50 percent of the fish are keepers and fluke have been taken up to 5 pounds. Hi-hook over the weekend was 45 fluke. Strip baits of fluke, flounder or sea robin and sandeels are the most productive baits. Best tide has been both sides of the change of tide in either direction.

The **Captain Richie** reports great fluking up and down Fire Island Inlet for the greater part of the week and that it is bound to be a super fluke season. Catches are very good, even for the non-pros.

Captain George Roman of the **Captree Queen** is also happy to report super fluking in Fire Island Inlet with everybody enjoying good catches of these delicious fish.

Captain Neil of the **Lady Ann** reports 300 big flounder on Saturday at the Sore Thumb and the hole north of the wreck buoy. Sunday was half flounder, half fluke and was a bit slower, at 6 to 10 fish per man. Mackerel are still outside the inlet strong. Thursday, Captain Neil had 100 fluke and predicts a good season.

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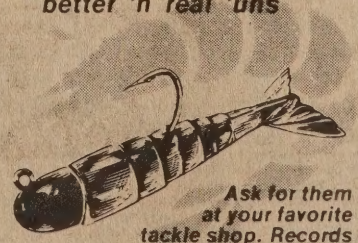

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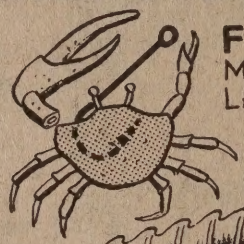

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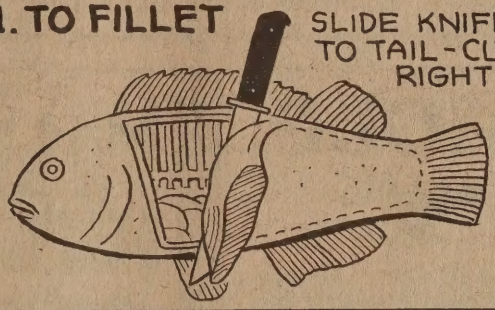

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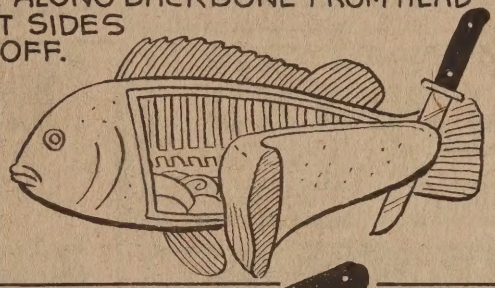

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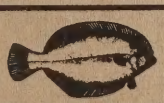

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BABYLON

Charlie's Fishing Station reports lots of fluke with a lot of keepers in the State Channel, at the Fox Creek area and the East-West Channel (the edges of the channels,) on sandeel/squid combos from the incoming to the high. Doc Grell had a half dozen weakfish up to 4½ lbs. and a few big blowfish. The flounders have about had it.

Babylon Fishing Station tells of weakfish and fluke at West Island and at where Dickerson's and Snake Hill Channels come together. Ocean Beach has cooled off a bit. Fluke are hitting sandeels, killies and squid, with half of the fish keepers.

Mario at **Hi-Hook Fishing Station** reports Saturday good, with blacks at the drawbridge on flounder rigs and worms, fish running to 5 pounds. Flounder behind Grass Island in the State Channel on worms, mussels and mussel chum. Fluke are all over the bay with Snake Hill Channel and the State Channel producing well. 18 fluke were brought in on Sunday and they seem to be starting in earnest.

LINDENHURST

Charlie's Bait and Tackle reports weakfish on salty dogs in the State Channel at Frank and Dick's, the Babylon Cut and Grass Island. Mucho mackerel 165 degrees out of the inlet. Blacks on the Kismet Reef going to 3 pounds on fiddlers at slack water. Fluke on sandeels at the Sore Thumb and at the Coast Guard Station. Reports of some blowfish on bloodworms.

Duke's Tackle Shop reports flounder are slowing but can still be had at the Sore Thumb and the old Lighthouse. On Sunday some fluke and weaks were caught. Gabby and Gary Ciuffo and Joe Monte on the "Restless Jr." took 17 blackfish from Kismet Reef along with a weak on green crab. Tom, Tony and Joe took 600 mackerel over the weekend in 88 feet of water, south/southeast of the inlet. This catch was not exceptional. Duke predicts that the weakfish will break loose by the weekend, that the blacks will be in solid and the fluking will continue to improve.

As you read this, the **Bullet** is on the high seas, on its way up to the Anchorage in Lindenhurst where a big season is planned on the tile, cod and pollack trips. There was some trouble with one of the 3 scanners, but a company rep. flown in from Washington made "All Better." Captain Jay Porter tells us that he has ordered and seen completed, the custom rods that will be available on the boat. They have been custom built by Duke's Bait and Tackle in Lindenhurst, and Jay says they are really beautiful sticks, seven foot 80 pound class solid fiberglass Shakespeare blanks, custom wrapped by Frank Searles. It is also reported that Patty Iskanian, Babylon Tuna Club Member and holder of 2 Women's IFGA Records, took a small baracuda from the deck of the **Bullet** while docked in Florida, the first fish to be caught from this vessel.

Point Lookout Island Park

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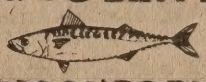
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AMITYVILLE

George Combs Bait and Tackle reports 16 fluke taken on Wednesday between 2½ and 3 pounds on sandeels by Kevin Bill and Joe of Massapequa on the "Jo-Lynn" in Fire Island Inlet. Brad and Marty Lavinder had 17 keeper fluke on Sunday and a few sea bass, all on sandeels at the Yellow Bar east of the F.I. Bridge. Good blackfishing at the bridges. Weaks are starting and are spotty in the East/West channel. Some blows and sea bass also. For weaks the ½ ounce Amber All-Mighty Squid has taken fish at Gilgo in the State Channel. Sandworms on a hi-low rig with sandeels for fluke should be used these days.

George advises to try chumming with grass shrimp and casting rubber shrimp into the slick.

Jonas Bait and Tackle reports mackerel in 80 feet of water southeast of the inlet with 102 fish for 3 men from the Amith Harbor Fishing Club. Weaks and fluke have been slow after the winds, but west and east Fox Creek and Ocean Beach are still producing fish. High water seems best. The Viking Shrimp lure is producing as is the Copaigue Hole in early morning hours. Flounder are slow but in holes and a few blowfish are hitting flounder rigs. A few blueclaws are being taken off Copaigue and in Four Corners in traps.

SEAFORD

Captain Eddie's Fishing Station reports mixed bags of fluke and flounder at Four Corners and Great Island Channel. Fluke are being drifted with sandeels and spearing on outgoing. Good size flounder can be picked from holes.

Lon Wanser Bait and Tackle tells us that John Swenson of Seaford had 5 weaks to 9 pounds on white shrimp lures at Ocean Beach on Saturday on his boat "Fish Cake." Flounder fishing is fair and better with no wind along the Massapequa shoreline from Florence Beach to Unqua Point and just west of the Wantagh drawbridge. Fluke are in the bays now in fair numbers, sixteen to 18 inch fish with Squaw Island producing best on sandeels and squid. A few weakfish at West Island on pink shrimp. Rumors of a few blows and blue claws.

MERRICK

Jimmy at **Nick's Fishing Station** reports that the Elizabeth B, piloted by Lenny Baum along with Joe Dymont and son Steve had 9 weaks on bucktail and squid at Ocean Beach during the week. An 18 inch flounder at 3½ pounds was taken from Swift Creek by Ken Entler of Merrick on bloodworms. Jimmy says his was the biggest flounder he has seen taken from local waters this year. Flounder is holding up, with Merrick Point producing catches of 40, 28, and 21 for 3 of Jimmy's skiffs. Hot shot Sal Diogani had 9 keeper fluke and 22 flounder in Swift Creek on outgoing tide on killies on Sunday.

Merrick Marine Supplies reports that Merrick sharpshooter Lenny Baum on his Elizabeth B took 9 weakfish in the 7 pound class at Ocean Beach using squid tipped bucktails during the week. Frank of Merrick Marine along with buddies Joe G. and Fred V. took 9 early season bass, the first of the year for them at the Radar Piers in Jamaica Bay on Sunday night, anchored with sandworms on the bottom.

N.Y. BIGHT Fishing Report

FREEPORT

Roy at **Mako Marina** tells of the first bluefish of the season which was taken by Ken Rogers of Freeport on Sunday on a live bunker off the beach, a 5 pounder.

Captain Bob Garraputa of the charterboat **Sundown** had 40 keeper fluke from 2 to 2¼ pounds out of Jones Inlet on Saturday, using squid and spearing and chum, while anchored.

Hook Line and Sinker Bait and Tackle reports mackerel from the Ji-4 miles out. George Tanner had 400 pounds of mackerel. Joe Sipos had a 7 pound weak in the State Channel between Tobay and Zach's Bay on a salty dog and additional weaks on Tri-Fin bucktails, all tides. There are fluke off Short Beach and the Jones Inlet area on spearing and sandeels.

Anthony's Fishing Station reports fairly good flounder fishing when the wind is down. Swift Creek and the High Flats Drain Bridge are best for flounder. Blackfish are available at the Bridges on fiddlers.

Hudson Point Fishing Station reports

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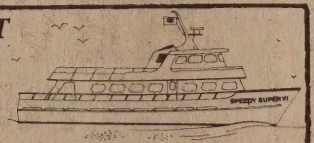

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that on Saturday, Bob Bellinzoni on the "Pattie Pequod II" had 16 blacks at the Meadowbrook Bridge on fiddlers, up to 4½ lbs. at low slack. On Sunday Joanne Jahncke took a 6½ lb. weak in Swift Creek on sandeels along with a dozen fluke while anchored.

The **Captain Lou II** reports flounder fishing a little spotty, with best results in the morning hours before boat traffic builds. He did pretty good over the weekend in Swift and Long Creek and at the Coast Guard Station, fish ¾ to 1½ pounds on outgoing and a few blowfish.

The **Lucky Strike III** called to say that Saturday's flounder fishing was slow due to the winds, but that a high point was when 11 year old Bob Kirshbaum of Bayside took a 2½ pound pool winning flounder out of Swift Creek on a bloodworm.

Captain Richie of the **Starstream II** happily reports that the mackerel fishing couldn't have been better all through Sunday, with great catches just southeast of the inlet. "All the mackerel you want" says Richie. Bags and Bags. The mackerel fishing has been so steady and heavy, that many of the **Starstream's** steady customers have been urging Richie to go for something else for a change. As a result, the **Starstream** will be switching over to sea bass by Thursday and will be well into them by this weekend.

this weekend. This should be a welcome change of pace. Richie says he forsees an excellent sea bass season and will try to get a jump on them.

Captain John of the **Aloma** reports very good sea bass fishing all week at offshore reefs and wrecks with mixed sizes up to 2½ pounds, with plenty of ling mixed in. Captain Paul on the **Aloma II** has been returning with mixed bags of fluke and flounder Saturday and Sunday.

The **Captain Al** reports that he is slaughtering the mackerel, that the catches are heavy and very close to Jones Inlet. He has been doing a leap job just off the pipeline and will be staying with the mackerel.

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POINT LOOKOUT

Ed's Fishing Station says the flounder did fairly well despite the week of wind which made the water muddy. The fluke have started in Jones Inlet and Reynolds Channel and are getting better every day. The Meadowbrook and Long Creek Bridges as well as the jetties all have plenty of blacks. Mackerel were caught in 50 feet of water south of Jones Inlet. As yet, no striped bass have come in but there are several people trying.

Scotty's Fishing Station reports very good fluking up to just before the big winds started last week, with the fish hungrily taking sandeels, killies and squid. Good spots are drifting from the Town of Hempstead Dock by the bridge, across the channel. Flounder at buoy 19 between Point Lookout and Long Beach on Reynolds Channel and also at the CG Station on outgoing water using worms and mussels and mussel chum. Blackfish at the Tea and Rhoda wrecks and at the Jones Beach Floating Scow, also at the Meadowbrook Bridge on fiddlers and green crab. Mackerel are in 65 feet of water due south of Jones Tower. A few very few small bass are being taken in nets outside.

Shelly Birenbaum has been newly elected a member of Squadron Anglers. Shelly tries hard and does get an occasional fish or two. He is a key member of the David H. Mann Advertising Agency, handling the Unimetrics account.

ISLAND PARK

Beckman's in Lynbrook said that they had a so-so weekend because of the high winds from Thursday on. Both Rockaway and Jones Inlet as well as Duck Point yielded up fluke. The keeper rate is about 50 percent with squid, spearing, and sandeels all in combination being the best bait to drift with. Although flounders are still fair, they are slowing and the blackfish are on the bridges and rock jetties and coming into their own. Blacks are caught mainly on fiddler and green crabs. Striped bass fishing continues to be in a rumor stage mostly and it seems that the weather is against it.

The **Ginnie Mae** has been having very good mackerel fishing over the weekend, with the main bodies of fish close by.

LONG BEACH

Tom at **Long Beach Sports Marina** says Duck Point and the Capri Club is still strong on flounder fishing. The macks are still outside near the NC buoy where the charterboat "Cowboy" loaded up on them on Saturday and Sunday. Although the flounder is still strong, the fluke are picking up off Duck Point by anglers using live killies.

JAMAICA BAY

Pretty good blackfishing at the Rockaway jetties and Atlantic Beach is reported by the **Cross Bay Rod and Gun Shop**. They are taking fiddlers and clams. Basically the quantity and size of flounder catches have remained the same but they have now moved down along Beach Channel Drive.
The flounder are one half to one pound and are taken with worms and mussel chum.

SHEEPSHEAD BAY

Fluke are starting to show according to **Salvo's Bait and Tackle**. They are being taken on moving water with squid or sandeels from the Coney Island Pier to the Verranzano Bridge. They are about 60 percent throwbacks and are taken on moving water. The blackfish are excellent at rocky places and pilings. They are hitting fiddlers and worms and range in size from 1 to 3 pounds from the shore, to 8 pounds from boats fishing wrecks. The striped bass have started along the sea wall and are being taken on a floated worm on the high tide either in or out. They range in size from schoolies to 9 pounds. The kids are having a ball with big blue claw crabs along the sea wall from Coney Island Pier to Korvetts.

George at **Bay End Dock** said that the blacks are excellent at Manhattan Beach and are hitting on fiddlers. While the flounders are taking blood and sand worms with mussel chum the sea flounders are at Tin Can Grounds and hitting sandworms. The first striped bass was taken by Dave Brown by accident while fishing for flounder in Jamaica Bay from his boat. It weighed in at 2½ pounds. Fluke have been rumored to have been taken at Seagate.

Captain Kevin on the **Dorothy B** reports he has had fantastic mackerel fishing all week right through Sunday but by the time you read this, the **Dorothy B** will be fishing for whiting, ling and blacks.

Captain Butch of the **Zephyr** tells us he has had excellent sea bass fishing, to the tune of 30 to 35 per man along with blacks and ling, fishing wrecks and rocks. The sea bass are running ¾ to 1 pound and this is an early, strong spring run.

Captain Tom of the **Pilot II** reports fabulous blackfishing along with very good sea bass off the Jersey Coast, with more and more sea bass being caught every day. The pool average of blacks is 6 pounds with the normal run being 1 to 3 pounds, mainly on fiddlers and green crab.

Captain Tony of the **Big Mohawk II** reports that Saturday was great at the NC and south of the NC, loading up on

Shown here is the pool winning flounder aboard the Lazy Day II. The flounder weighed 2 pounds and was caught on one of the recent charters.

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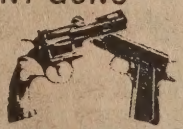

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Louis Tinto with 3 blackfish he caught at Sand City using fiddler crabs. The fish weighed 6, 5½ and 1 lb. Subscriber Club Photo.

big mackerel for Seaboard Printing Ink Company charter. On Sunday, Tom Rubino and party, with Captain Dan at the wheel fished Tobay to the tune of 30 to 40 macks per man. The **Big Mohawk II** is featuring weekday charters at special rates so this is a good opportunity to get in on some uncrowded week day fishing.

Captain Mickey of the **Pina III** has just gone into the water and his taking charter reservations now, he asked us to announce. He has been all spruced up by the Shipyard and in celebration of the Bicentennial is sporting a red White and Blue paint job.

The **Blue Sea II** has been having very good mackerel fishing both Saturday and Sunday from the BA to the Tower and call this one of the best mackerel seasons in a long time.

The **Flamingo II** had exceptionally good mackerel fishing on Saturday and Sunday with a fast and steady pick once the fish were located. Captain Walter will stay with mackerel for the early part of the week we are in now but by the time you read this will be switching into the very good run of sea bass, blacks and whiting.

Captain Jim of the **Amberjack IV** says he loaded up on mackerel by the sacks full both on Saturday and Sunday fishing the ba buoy and New Grounds area.

Captain Harold Wrege of the **Chief**, the areas only 10 A.M. boat, has been getting a lot of ling and whiting over the weekend at Ambrose. Big ling, and a few sea bass, fishing four or five wrecks. The **Chief** will now be going exclusively for big ling and whiting and will catch the remaining mackerel next year.

The whiting are one to two pounds and the ling are 2 to 5 pounds.

The **Helen H** reports very good mackerel fishing all through the week and weekend and plans to stay with them for awhile longer.

Charlie Sweeny of the **Chianti** said that the mackerel fishing has been pretty good at the NC buoy. Most of the fish were jigged near the bottom.

STATEN ISLAND

Lenny at **Santo's Sport Shop** says the flounder seem to be slowing. Princess Bay is best area at present and at Great Kills Park a slow pick is had and the beach side is better. Striped bass are slow and scattered from Fort Wadsworth to Princess Bay. The back of Great Kills Park at sun-up and sun-down has had good fishing by anglers using Redfin or Rebel lures. Blacks are getting better at the Rock Jetty of Great Kills Park and are also at the Old Home Dock. The Bug Light has a steady pick of these fish, although they are still small. The piers seem to be yielding up fairly good quantities of eels and nice size tom cods.

NORTH SHORE Fishing Report

ORIENT POINT

Orient By The Sea Marina reports th the bass are in at Plum Gut as evidenc by Rich Angivine with a 25 pounde brother Joe with an 18 and 25 pound and Ron Detrick with a 35 pounder, fi all taken on drifted yellow bucktails, 1 ounce. Rich and Joe are from Greenpo and Ron from Southold.

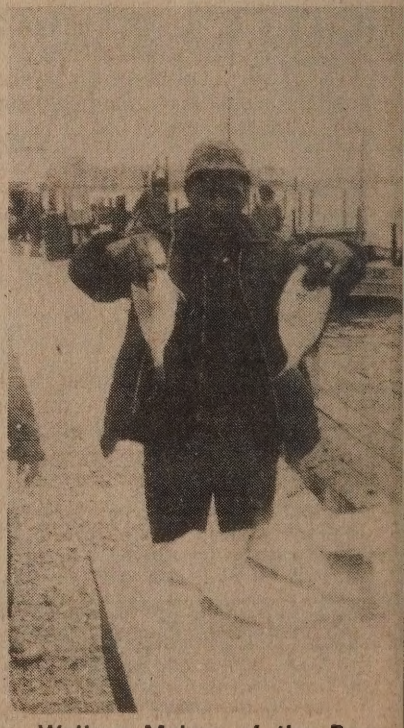
GREENPORT

Art White's Bait Shop reports wea fishing is good at Paradise Point, Bla Dog and between buoys 16 and 17. The are also picking up quite a few porgies these same areas.

Richie Jensen of the **Wilhelric** sa that the weakfishing in the Peconics coming along pretty good. Richie sa don't forget that he has a special evenir trip for these weaks leaving at 5 P.M Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

The **Brand X** continues to have ni big flounders. The weakfish are defi itely on the upswing and starting Thursday, the **Brand X** will go for then

Art White's Bait Shop said that th fish that are being jigged in the Plu



Wallace Mainor of the Bronx caught 18 porgies up to 3 lbs. and 2 weaks up to 7 lbs. west of bouy 17. Photo courtesy of Port of Eygpt.

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BALDWIN

Clif Brown, Wyatt Robertson and Marshall Robinson from Manhatten caught 40 weakfish and a few porgies in the South Race between bouys 25 and 29 with bucktails, squid and worms. Photo courtesy of Capt. Marty's Fishing Station.

Gut are all big with some running better than 20 pounds. Yellow bucktails with pork rind are drifted in the deep for these fish.

SOUTHOLD

Dot at **Southold Fishing Station** reports that there are porgies at Jessups and weakfish at Jessups and Rose's Grove. The weaks are taking worms and squid and run to 7 pounds. Flounders are mainly had on skimmer clam and some have reached 2 pounds.

NEW SUFFOLK

The weakfishing and porgy fishing has busted wide open in Peconic Bay, according to **Captain Marty's Fishing Station**. Over the weekend rental skiffs were taking 30 to 40 weakfish and 30 to 40 large sea porgies up to 3½ pounds a boat. Incoming tide has been best in the South Race. Salty Dogs, white bucktails and strip squids are all producing weakfish. Joe Haggard, Israel Singleton and Joe Ritter took 75 porgies up to 2½ pounds, 14 large weakfish, one 4 pound sea bass and 24 flounder. Phil Loskwitz took a 9¾ pound weakfish.

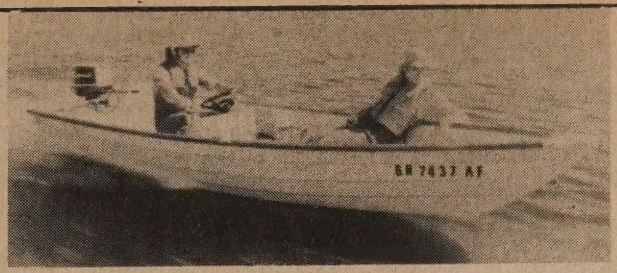
JAMESPORT

Frank at **Jamesport Bait and Tackle** said the weakfishing is very good drifting between buoys 25 to 30. These fish are all being taken on shrimp type lures such as the Salty Dog or Cordell's tipped with squid. Fluke are at Nassau Point drifting with squid. Richard Riano of the Bronx took one fluke of 13 pounds 8 ounces from Nassau Point. Porgies are very good at Jessups on worm and clam while the flounders are starting to taper off and become scarce. Just a few striped bass were taken at the buoy 29 sand bar using sinking small Rebels. Sundown is the best time to try for them. Frank said the only thing that they are getting out of the Sound as of yet is blackfish on worms...no striped bass as of yet.

MT. SINAI HARBOR

Dick's Sporting Goods reports that even with the winds there was good blackfishing to be had. The beach is fished with fiddler crabs and quite a few blacks over ten pounds have been taken. Dick says he feels the big run of fish is still to come. Mackerel fishing has been spotty due mainly to the winds but flounder fishing is from fair to good. Striped bass is moving into the beach as atested to by the flounder and blackfish-

JOHN DORY



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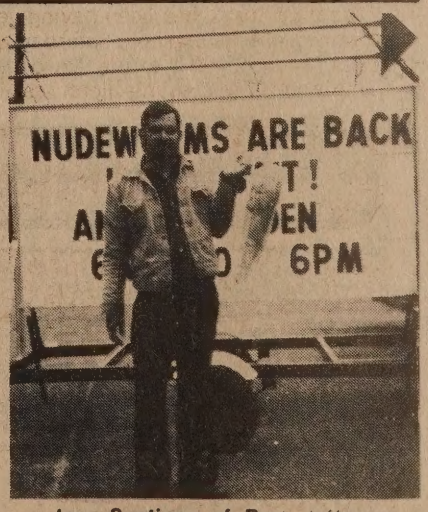

Jose Santiago of Port Jefferson weighed this 6¾ lb. blackfish at the Anglers Den of Selden. The fish was one of several caught off of Miller Place.

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James Ting caught this 5½ lb. striper while fishing under the Whitestone Bridge on tapeworms. Subscriber Club Photo.

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ermen who are catching anything from shorts to 11 pounds. Dick says the beach seems to be getting dirtier and dirtier as the years go by. He recommends to all if you bring something to the beach, put it in a bag and bring it back out.

PORT JEFFERSON

Caraftis Fishing Station reports early morning mackerel fishing at buoy 11. After that, they scatter and have to be hunted. Blackfish are still very good Oldfield Point close in the rocks at Mt. Misery and Miller Place. John recommends worm bait or other soft bait as opposed to crab bait for the blackfish. Cedar Beach casters are catching school bass on a rising tide.

Captain John Fischer of the **Betty W** has been fishing blacks all week and weekend with excellent results. The **Janet C** ran open boat on Saturday and had 10 blacks per man.

NORTHPORT

Nice striped bass being picked up on Hopkins and plastic worm lures at the Centerport Beach according to Pete at **Greenlawn Sports Shop**. Contrary to usual fishing practice these bass are being picked up at low tide and during mid day. Sizes are from shorts to 8 pounds. Flounders continue to have good size catches. Mussel chum is primarily needed now to bring the fish under the boat and then work them with worms. Fleets Cove Beach is the best area at present. Makamah Beach blackfish are hitting green crabs.

HUNTINGTON

Great mackerel fishing said George at **Four Winds Tackle.** Catches are from 400 to 200 a boat and are from Diamond Point to Center Island. Flounders are in Lloyd Harbor and in Duck Island and can be taken on any moving tide. The bigger fish of 1 to 2 pounds are found off Callahans Beach. Fiddlers and Green crabs are being used to take blacks which are at most rocky areas of which Eatons Neck is the most promising. These fish go from 3 pounds and up. Porgies have hit the area of Sand City and are taking sand worms. Clam Chum is used to entice them to the boat and these fish are 1½ pounds and better. The first weakfish of the season was taken by Huntington Angler Club member John Pellegrano. This 8 pound 13 ounce weakfish took a surface plug and John also had a 5½ pound striped bass.

Pete Novellino of the **Ever Ready** said the blacks and flounders are holding up pretty well. Eatons Neck is best for blacks and they are ranging in size from ½ to 5 pounds. On Saturday and Sunday Walt Speight of Wyandanch was pool winner with a 5 pound black and

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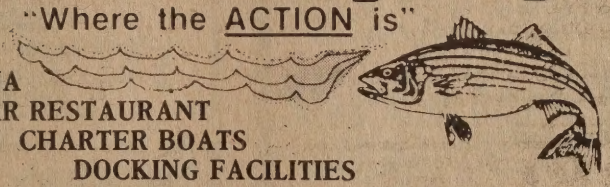

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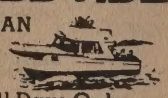

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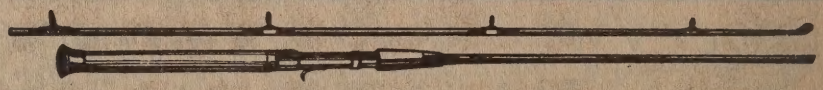

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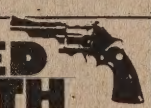

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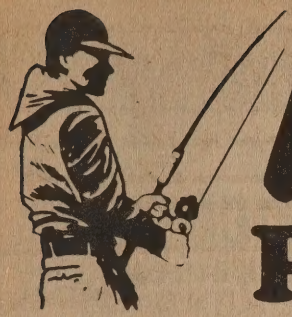

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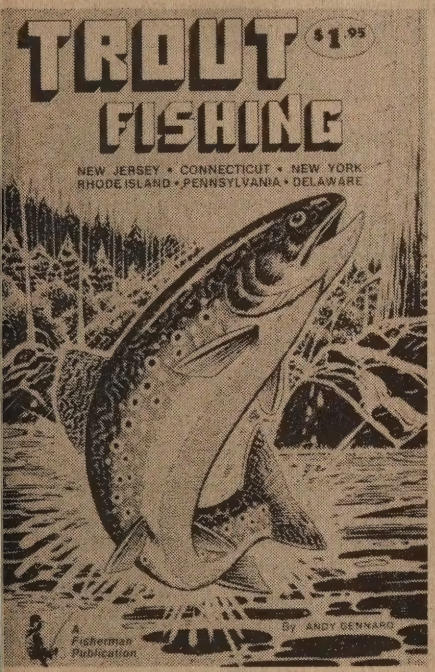

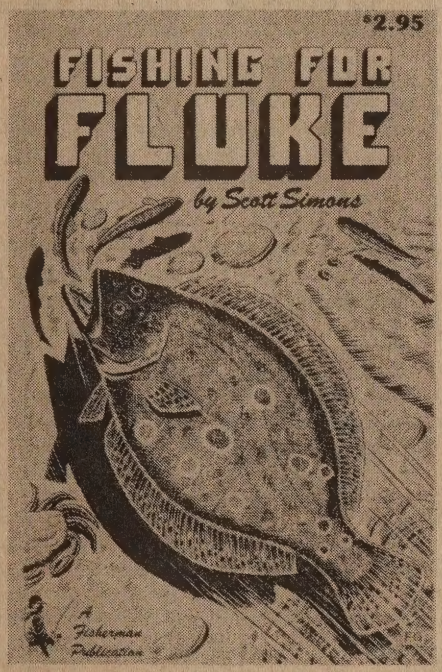

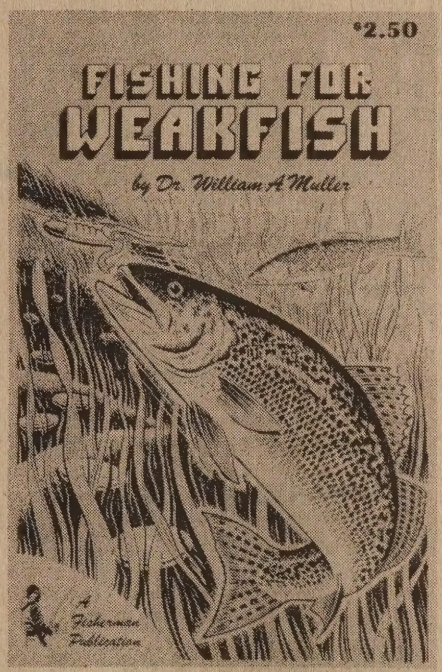

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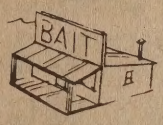

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66 mackerel taken in three hours by Jim and Joan Longtin out of Port Jefferson. The catch was taken on Sat. April 24. Subscriber Club Photo.

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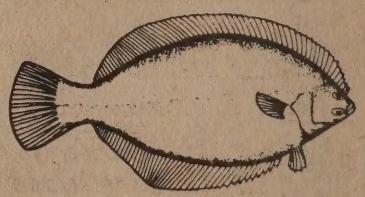

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Sunday's hi-hook.

Ronnie's Bait and Tackle reports that the mackerel are scattered in the Sound but your best bet is the Lilco Platform. Mixed catches of striped bass, blacks and weakfish were had at the Lilco outflow. Floating sandworms on high tide in and out seems to work well. Sand City porgies are of large size and good quantities hitting well on worms and clams. The blackfish are at the same location which can be had on fiddlers. Striped bass fishing is good at Marshall Field, Huntington Inlet, and Cold Spring Harbor Causeway. These areas are best done trolling worms. Plugs off the beach have produced some striped bass.

COLD SPRING HARBOR

On Sunday Captain Dike Williams of the **Therapy** took out Jesse Poritz and party. They had over 40 mackerel in 2½ hours in the morning in the Sound. They switched to bottom fishing and had 30 flounder biggest of which is 2 pounds and a 5 pound black fishing with mussel chum and sandworms in Oyster Bay.

ROCKY POINT

Rocky Point Fishing Stop said the weather slowed fishing down somewhat. Jim Bomofide and son Vin had 5 blacks of 6 to 9 pounds on sandworms off the beach. The first sea porgies were taken this weekend from the beach and the expectation is for better catches. Boats are out in the Sound picking away at the mackerel which are all of good size and filled with roe. Striped bass fishing is slow from the beach on worms. Stan says he is now open at 4:30 A.M. every weekend for the season.

GLEN COVE

Glen Cove Sports Shop said worm trolling for striped bass has been very good. This is occuring at Peacock Point, Gull Rock, and Maxwells Breakwater. The Prybil Beach area and Mattinecock Point are one of the better areas to take striped bass using popping plugs or top swimmers. These good size schoolies can be had either from the boat or the beach. Mackerel are from the Glen Cove breakwater to Peacock Point up to about

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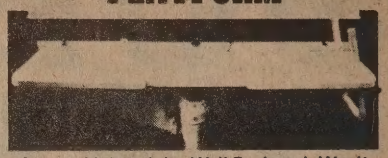
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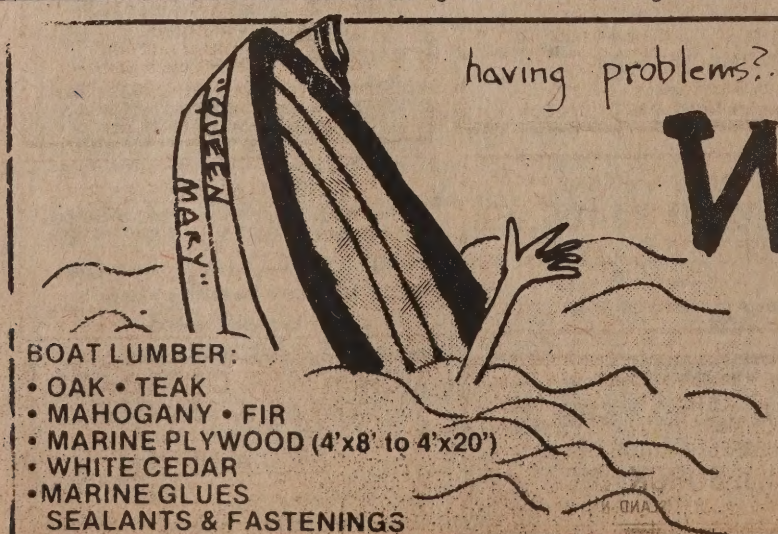
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2 miles off. John recommends trolling with a mackerel tree and Krocodile lure to find the school then jig or cast for them. Any rocky area now seems to contain better than fair amounts of blackfish. John's first bait recommendation is clam or worm. At present he does not advise hard baits. Sporadic catches of weakfish of 2 to 3 pounds are being had every day. They may break any day now.

PORT WASHINGTON

Moreland's Bait and Tackle says that the Hempstead Harbor area and any rocky point will yield blacks of 4 to 6 pounds. Worms are best followed by fiddler and green crabs. Lure fishing for striped bass is about to make its debut as shown by a 13 pound striped bass catch in the Hempstead Harbor area by Chet Chicoski. Weaks of 4 to 5 pounds have been eyeballed in Manhasset Bay and are best taken on fresh bait. Ask Guss for the details. Eddy Kulak took 94 flounder from Manhasset Bay on worm but his first try was very poor and he had to return for mussel chum in order to get this catch.

CITY ISLAND

Plenty of Boston mackerel in the Sound according to **John's Gun and Tackle** in the Bronx. He says there are more coming so be prepared with mackerel trees. Big blacks are taking mostly fresh bait from Throggs Neck and areas east in most rocky areas. Oyster Bay and Bayville are still good spots for flounder fishing. Turtle Cove as usual still has schoolies responding to either split-tail Rebels or bottom fished worms. The surprise of the season are the ten good sizes porgies that Captain Zack Grossman and his charter party took ovff Mattinecock Point while flounder fishing. And they didn't do bad on the flounders either. John wants to remind those who haven't made their reservations for the June 6th Quincy Trip to do so soon as some boats are still open.

Continued from page 13.

small rubber bands or Crazy Glue so the worm won't be hurt.

Fishing for weakfish with sandworms may be done at anchor simply by feeding the worm into the current. Anchor the boat slightly up-current of a bottom formation likely to hold a few weakfish like a slope, hole or a rip created by a sandbar or shoal. Then just feed the sandworm into the current by letting out line with the reel on free-spool. If the water is deep, you may have to add a splitshot or two to deliver the bait into the feeding zone of the weak. In shallow water you can add a small float to the line to keep the bait at a predetermined depth above the bottom.

Sandworms may also be cast and retrieved from a slowly drifting boat in the shallow flats around grassy islands in bay waters, but it often is difficult to cast with any distance without casting the worm further than the hook.

Deep-jigging with a sandworm can be very effective in late summer when the larger weakfish are found in the deeper waters of the ocean off the sandy beaches of the south shore bays. Just put a whole sandworm on a Diamond jig or Hopkins and deep-jig as explained in Part Three of this series.

Trolling a whole sandworm at dawn or dusk is probably the most effective, least used method of taking weakfish by anglers. Rig the whole worm on the hook of a willow-leaf or June bug spinner and slowly troll around areas likely to have weakfish. In shallow water or when the fish are feeding on top, as they often do during the quiet hours around dawn or dusk, you can slowly troll effectively with monofilament line. But if the fish are deep, add a small Bead Chain keeled drail to get the sandworm down to the fish. Try to keep the troll at the speed of a slow walk, and take care not to gun the engine or constantly change speeds or you can easily spook the fish.

BAITFISH. Small baitfish such as the sand eel, spearing and killy can all be effective baits for weakfish at times, although they cannot be considered as "preferred" baits. Put one or more sandeels on a hook through the eye sockets, the same for spearing, and once through the lips of a live killy. Sandeels are best in May and early June, while spearing and killies produce best in the summer months.

SHEDDER CRABS. While the use of shedder or soft-shell blueclaw crabs is very popular for weakfish in Chesapeake Bay and along the New Jersey coastline, I've never even heard of anyone using them on Long Island. Never-the-less, I can't see why they wouldn't do as well here as elsewhere, so if you like to experiment, give 'em a try. Shedder and soft-shell blueclaws can usually be purchased live in the local fish market when they are in season during the late summer months or you can catch your own if you're not careful. The crabs can be fished whole live and just allowed to swim in the current, or cut into halves or quarters and fished on the bottom.

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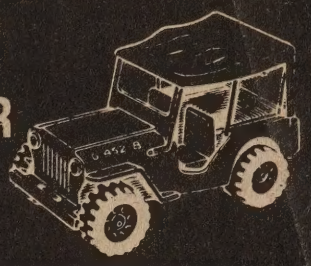

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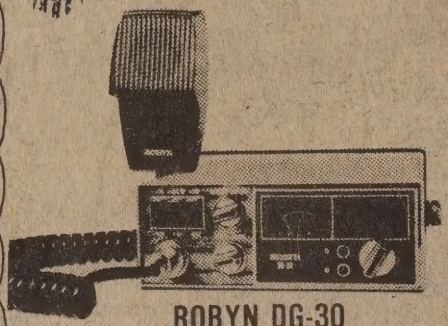

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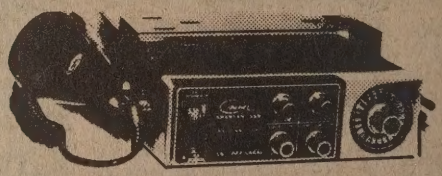

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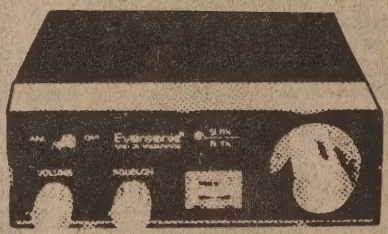

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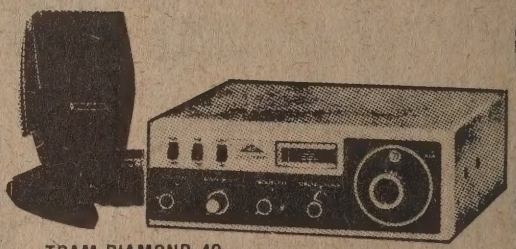

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